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BEAUTIES
OF
NATURE DELINEATED:
OR,
PHILOSOPHICAL
AND PIOUS CONTEMPLATIONS
ON THE
WORKS OF NATURE,
AND THE
SEASONS OF THE YEAR.

Selected from STURM'S REFLECTIONS,
By the Rev. THADDEUS M. HARRIS.

" Whom Nature's works can charm, with God himself
" Hold converse ; grow familiar day by day
" With his conceptions, act upon his plan,
" And form to his the relish of their souls."

AKENSIDE,

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PREFACE



PREFACE.

THE selection here offered to the public is made from STURM'S "*Reflections, on the works of God and of his Providence, throughout all nature, for every day in the Year.*" Copious testimonials in favor of that work might have been extracted from foreign Journals and Reviews; but it will be sufficient to observe that its merit, and the high opinion which has been entertained of it, are sufficiently evinced in the numerous and large editions through which it has passed in the original German and in most of the languages of Europe. Though the English translation is inaccurate, inelegant, and frequently ungrammatical, it has been well received and frequently reprinted.* So interesting, entertaining, and instructive was the matter and the sentiment, that the manner and the style was

* Translated into English from the German, by a *Layor*, in 3 volumes, 12mo.

but little regarded.* The Editor was employed to revise those volumes, and make such corrections in the style and natural philosophy (for the author was not fully acquainted with the modern discoveries and improvements) as would recommend an impression of the work in America. But he found so much that might be corrected, and so much that might be omitted, that he thought it advisable to relinquish the idea of retaining the whole series of numbers, and to give the work itself a new form. Accordingly he has arranged the subjects in a natural and perspicuous order, calculated to carry forward the thoughts in an instructive and pleasing train. He has frequently united and compressed several of the numbers into one ; omitting, abridging, and altering paragraphs as he thought best. In short, the most scattered materials he has endeavoured to dispose into something like order and system. Of this the table of contents will give some idea. The first

* Since, a new translation, abridged, has been published by HEMET, 1798, in a 12mo. vol. of 448 pages. And a little volume has appeared, called "The BEAUTIES of STURM, by ELIZA ANDREWS." These the Editor has lately seen : but they could neither assist nor supercede the present work.

part is intended to exhibit distinct views of the works of nature ; the second is accommodated, principally, to the Seasons of the Year.

Those articles, which in the table of contents are distinguished by an asterisk, are principally or entirely compiled from other sources : a liberty not freely indulged in any of the rest.

At the recommendation of a particular friend, and in compliance with the taste of the day, *mottos* have been selected, as heads to the different chapters. These are chiefly taken from the English poets ; but some are original. Persons of more retentive memories might have recollected better ones ; but it is hoped that these will not be thought altogether inappropriate.

To every reflecting, serious, person, this little volume will prove a valuable acquisition. It is eminently calculated to give enlarged conceptions of the works of Creation ; and, by an easy transition, to lead the thoughts " from Nature up to Nature's God." It is particularly useful to young persons, whom it will furnish with a just and rational knowledge of the various phenomena of

nature, and the admirable economy of the system to which they belong ; assisting them in the wisest reflections upon every thing around them, and inspiring them with *the most exalted sentiments of the SUPREME BEING*—all whose works proclaim and praise him.

“ Who can this field of miracles survey,
“ And not with Galen all in rapture say,
“ Behold a God ! adore him and obey !”

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PART I.
ON THE
WORKS OF NATURE.

AN INVITATION TO CONTEMPLATE GOD IN
THE WORKS OF NATURE.

"Begin, my soul, the exalted lay !
Let each enraptur'd thought obey,
And praise the Almighty's name.
Lo ! Heaven, and earth, and seas, and skies,
In one melodious concert rise,
To swell the inspiring theme !"

OGILVIE.

O YE who adore with me the Lord, by whom
the heavens and the earth were made, come and
reflect on his works ! Behold the wonders that he
has done ! Acknowledge and have a lively sense
of his mercies ! Of all the knowledge that we can
acquire this is the most important, the most easy
and agreeable. We could dispense with many
sciences which we take such pains to learn ; but
the knowledge of God and his works is absolutely
necessary, if we wish to fulfil the end of our crea-
tion, and by that mean secure our happiness here
and hereafter. We do well undoubtedly to seek
to know God, such as he has revealed himself to

us in his divine word ; but we shall not receive that revelation with an entire conviction of heart, if we do not join to it this other revelation, by which he has made himself manifest to us throughout all nature, as our Lord, our Father, and Benefactor. It is the best preparation to understand, and to receive as we ought the gospel of Christ, for this reason, that, in teaching his disciples the truth of religion, the divine Redeemer often spoke of the works of nature, and made use of the objects which the physical and moral world afford, to lead his hearers to reflections on spiritual and heavenly things. In general it is a noble employment, and well worthy of man, to study constantly the book of nature ; to learn in it the truths which may remind us of the immense greatness of God, and our own littleness ; of his blessings, and the obligations which they impose upon us. It is shameful for man to be inattentive to the wonders which surround him on all sides, and to be as insensible to them as the brutes are. What employment can be more pleasing to the human mind than to contemplate in the heavens, the earth, the waters, the night and day, in a word, throughout all nature, the wisdom, power, and goodness of our Creator and Preserver ! What can be more delightful than to discover in the whole creation, in all the natural world, in every thing which we see, traces of the providence and tender mercies of the Father of all beings !

There are no amusements, no worldly joys, of which we are not soon tired; but these are pleasures ever new.

Let us adore God in his wonderful works. Let us endeavour more and more to be acquainted with him. Let us reflect on his greatness. Let us admire his power and wisdom in each of his creatures. And let us observe, in every season of the year, his goodness, and tender mercies towards every being on earth. This employment will make us not only happy but virtuous; for if we have God and his works continually in our sight, with what love and veneration shall we not be penetrated! with what confidence shall we not resign ourselves to him! with what zeal and transport shall we not sing his praise!

NATURE DISPLAYED.

"To me be Nature's volume broad display'd ;
And to peruse its all-instructive page,
Or haply catching inspiration thence,
Some easy passage, raptur'd, to translate,
My sole delight."

THOMPSON.

HAPPY the man, whose genius, rising above the mere gratification of his senses, prompts him to inquire, with the assistance of reason, into the true cause of things, and to pierce through the dark veil which conceals from mortals the mysteries of nature ! How insensible are mankind ! They stop to observe the course of a river. Supinely lying on the green turf, they contemplate the clear stream murmuring as it flows. The coolness of the water, the enamelled field, the verdure of its banks ; every thing enchants their sight. But few know how to enjoy a still greater pleasure, that of tracing the source itself of these waters, the inexhaustible reservoir whence they proceed. Thus, we generally look only on the outside of things. But let us go deeper ; let us dare to open a path into the recesses of nature.

How noble is it to reflect on the principles of things, to contemplate their essence ! It is to this that the wise man soars ; all the rest is but the trifling amusement of the vulgar. It would be totally impossible to reckon all the blessings of nature, bestowed upon us ; but let us endeavour to comprehend in some degree, how much we owe to our sovereign Benefactor. For this purpose, let us look into the places of our several enjoyments, and see what productions of the earth are there presented to us. The flowers, which appear but a mere amusement, are lovely ornaments to our retreats, and by the sweets they exhale, and their beautiful colours, charm and delight us. The orchards and kitchen gardens are not so pleasing to the eye, but their utility compensates for this : they produce successions of excellent provisions for our tables during the whole year, much more wholesome than those invented by art to excite, or (more properly speaking) to corrupt, our taste.

Let us go a little farther ; let us quit the confinement of towns and villages, to enjoy the spacious fields where the industry of man produces that staff of life, that bread which supports the whole human species. The earth faithfully rewards the farmer's toil, and returns with incredible interest all that is laid out upon it. Unim-

paired by age, it constantly resumes the charms of spring, and after having produced the most plentiful harvest, a winter's rest entirely repairs its losses.

Let us now enter into the woods. The light of day obscured by the thick foliage of the stately trees, the pleasing coolness, the still silence that reigns through all, combine to give them a striking air of solemnity and grandeur. What human industry would be sufficient to plant, to water, and to take care of those trees, so indispensable to us: for without them, where should we find fuel to prepare our food, and to protect us from perishing with cold! God alone creates and preserves those forests, which are in so many ways of inestimable value to us.

Let us now glance over our meadows and pasture. We behold them enamelled with flowers, and full of all sorts of herbs, which not only serve as pasture for animals, but many of them are delightful to us, and furnish us with excellent medicines.

How beautiful an object, how great an ornament to nature, is a river! Whether we stop to reflect upon its motion, its utility, or its origin and

supplies. The beauty of its course charms us, the multitude of blessings it affords fills us with gratitude, and the obscurity of its source raises our admiration. It is at first but a little stream trickling down a hill, and which the smallest pebble is enough to divert from its course : But soon, the overflowing of lakes, the melting of snow, the falling of floods, enlarge it. It makes itself a bed, and flows copiously into it ; it enriches the fisherman's hut, and the labourer's dwelling ; and, after having been the ornament and delight of the country, it flows with majesty towards the cities, where it conveys plenty, by means of the ships it bears. " The river of God is full of water ;" thousands of springs burst from the bosom of the earth, and the vast ocean embracing it, absorbs the whole.

In the inside of our globe, as in a vast magazine, are found laid up for our different occasions, salts of various sorts, quarries, mines, stones, metals, &c.

Lastly, the very air which we breathe is full of blessings. The clouds which collect there pour upon us these fruitful rains, which " water our furrows, and make them soft, and which cause the land to yield its fruits in their season." The

same air, besides giving free passage to those winds which sweep away contagion, transmits also this beneficial light, these salubrious rays which illumine, warm, and quicken all nature.

Here let us pause, and adore that beneficent, that almighty Hand, that only inexhaustible Source, that Ocean whence flow all our blessings. And let us endeavour to deserve those that are eternal, which as much surpass the present, as the heavens are beyond the earth, eternity beyond time, the Creator beyond the creature.

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MAGNIFICENCE OF GOD IN HIS WORKS.

"These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty! thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair; thyself how wondrous then!"

MILTON.

WHY is there such splendor in the works of God? Why is there such magnificence in all that we see? Why do we every where discover such numberless objects, which appear each more beautiful than the other, and each of which has its peculiar charms? Why do we every where find new cause for wonder and admiration? It is, doubtless, that we may never cease to admire and adore the great Being, who is infinitely more beautiful, more sublime, and more magnificent, than all which we admire most in nature. It is that we may continually say to ourselves, If the works be so complete, what must the Creator be? If such is the beauty of creatures, what must be the inexpressible beauty, the infinite grandeur of him who beholds with one glance the whole creation? If the sun have a dazzling brightness which our eyes cannot bear, ought we to be sur-

prised that he who lighted that globe dwells in inaccessible light, where no eye has seen, or can see him? Let us, therefore, hereafter divide our attention between God and nature; in order to consider in the latter, as in a glass, the image of that Being whom we cannot contemplate face to face. Let us collect the many beauties and perfections, which are scattered over the vast empire of the creation; and when their innumerable multitude strikes us with astonishment, we shall say to ourselves that, compared with the perfections of their Creator, they are less than a drop in the ocean. Let us only consider what is amiable and beautiful in created beings, abstracting what is finite and limited, in order to form a more just and proper idea of the excellence of the Ruler of the universe; and, when the sight of their faults and imperfections shall have lessened our admiration of their beauty, let us cry out; If the creation be so beautiful, notwithstanding its defects, how great and worthy of admiration must he be, whose splendor is spotless, more pure than light, more brilliant than the sun!

“God has shewn himself in the creation as a Being infinitely wise.” There is no creature however insignificant it may appear, that has not its use; and all of them are formed in the manner

best adapted to the purposes of their existence. This we know with certainty of those with which we are acquainted, and we may conclude the same of the rest by analogy. From the sun, down to the lowest worm, or smallest plant, we shall every where find, that, for the purpose designed by the Creator, nothing could be formed otherwise than it is. The most minute parts of each are manifestly adapted to its destination : They serve for the functions prescribed them ; and the whole creature would be defective, if any one of its parts were hurt or taken away. How wonderful is the whole which results from the connection between all creatures in general ! Each is in its place ; each has its proper office, and none of these could fail without causing an imperfection more or less in the whole. When, therefore, we represent to ourselves the Being who formed this innumerable multitude of creatures animate and inanimate ; who has not only designed each of them for certain purposes ; but has disposed and arranged every part of them in the manner best adapted to those purposes, so that there is nothing superfluous or wanting ; who has, from the connection between each individual, formed an admirable whole, in which there exists the most perfect harmony ; must we not be struck with astonishment, and cry out with

respectful admiration, "O the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

"In the creation God has shewn himself a Being infinitely good." What multitudes of animated creatures has his beneficent hand produced! Is not life invaluable to every thing that breathes? Is it not a blessing to the poorest worm? What pleasure does not God take in doing good, since he has bestowed on so many creatures the privilege of existence! But of what use would their existence be, if they were to be immediately deprived of it? The Creator has therefore ordained, that each should live as long as was necessary for its destination. He has appointed to each creature the place which it is to inhabit, and each finds on its entering the world every thing necessary for the preservation of its life. How many enjoyments and pleasing sensations does the Creator grant with life to all animated beings, and particularly to mankind! With what magnificence has he not adorned and embellished the world which man was to inhabit! What sweets does not social life afford! What tender ties, what warm affections, what delightful sentiments has he created for the heart to enjoy! Let us never be ungrateful to such a bountiful Creator; and, since we are endowed with reason, and are capa-

ble of knowing and loving God, let us acknowledge with transports of joy, that "the earth is full of his mercies."

"In the creation God has shewn himself as a Being of infinite power." This unlimited power, which is visible in all creatures, is particularly so in the two extremes, in the greatest and in the most minute works of the universe. What but an almighty hand could form the firmament, that immense extent, that prodigious space, which contains such a number of celestial bodies? Who but he could preserve this immense fabric, fix it unshaken, and yet keep up in it so many different, though regular movements? Who but he could raise the sun to such a height, appoint its situation so as not to deviate from it, and maintain it unsupported in that vast expanse? Could any but an almighty power give motion to the earth, the moon, and stars, so as to run invariably the course prescribed them, to finish and begin again their revolutions at certain appointed periods? Or, if we consider the divine Omnipotence in the smallest objects, we shall find it there as incomprehensible as in the largest. We need only cast our eyes on the dust under our feet. Even that is inhabited by an innumerable multitude of animals, so small that several thousands of them joined

together would not be equal to a grain of sand. Yet each of these animals has its exterior and interior parts ; each has its sense and feeling, each has its instinct, loves life, and endeavours to preserve it. Behold also the grass of the field, the hairs of your head, the blossoms of the trees, and study their construction, their origin, and use. We shall every where discover wonders ; every where acknowledge the infinite power of him who forms celestial globes with as much ease as he creates a worm or causes a flower to grow.

How great and numerous are the works of God ! They are full of wisdom, and the earth is filled with blessings. May these reflections excite in us the love, respect, and confidence, due to the wisest, best, and most mighty of Beings !

PLEASURES WHICH THE CONTEMPLATION
OF NATURE PROCURES.

"Where'er the pleasing search my thoughts pursue,
Unbounded goodness rises to my view ;
Nor does our world alone its influence share ;
Exhaustless bounty and unwearied care
Extend through all the infinity of space,
And circle nature with a kind embrace."

BLACKMORE.

NATURE offers to all her children, with maternal goodness, the first, the most innocent, the least expensive, and most universal of all pleasures.

It is almost impossible not to find charms in the contemplation of nature. And that it may be enjoyed without expense is manifest ; the poor as well as the rich may indulge in it. But this is what lessens its value. We are so foolish as not to prize what others share with us ; while, if we were reasonable, nothing should give more value to a blessing than the thought that it makes the happiness of our fellow-creatures, as well as our own. Compared to this pleasure, so noble and so sensible, how trifling and vain are those far-fetched

magnificent amusements which the rich obtain with so much trouble and expence, which leave a certain void in the soul, and always end in *ennui* and disgust ! Whereas nature, rich and beneficent, presents us continually with new objects. Pleasures which are only the work of our own imagination are of short duration, and vanish like a dream, the charms and illusions of which are lost at the moment of waking. But the pleasures of reason and of the heart, those which we enjoy in contemplating the works of God, are solid and lasting, because they open to us an inexhaustible source of new delights. The starry sky, the earth enamelled with flowers, the melodious notes of the birds, the various landscapes and prospects one more delightful than another, may continually furnish us with new subjects of satisfaction and joy. If we be insensible to these it is certainly our own fault ; it is because we behold the works of nature with an inattentive and indifferent eye. The duty of a rational being consists in enjoying innocently all that surrounds him. He knows how to draw resources from every thing, and has the art of being happy under any circumstances.

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THE ENJOYMENTS WHICH WE FIND IN NATURE.

"Happy the man, who from the world escap'd,
In still retreats and flowery solitudes,
To Nature's voice attends from month to month,
And day to day through the revolving year;
Admiring sees her in her every shape;
Feels all her sweet emotions at his heart;
Takes what she liberal gives, nor thinks of more."

THOMPSON.

ON whatever part of the creation we turn our eyes we every where find something, which interests either our senses, our imagination, or our reason. All nature is so formed as to afford us numberless pleasing objects, and to supply us with variety of enjoyments continually succeeding each other. Our love of variety is constantly excited and constantly gratified. There is no part of the day that does not afford us pleasures both for our senses and our minds. While the sun illuminates the horizon, the plants, the animals, with a thousand agreeable objects, strike our eyes: and when the night spreads its veil the majesty of the sky transports and charms us. On every side nature labours to surprise us with new pleasures. Even the smallest worm, a leaf, a grain of sand,

present us with objects of admiration. The same spring which waters the vallies, invites us to sleep, pleases the ear, and serves also to quench our thirst. The shady forest, which defends us from the intense heat of the sun, where we enjoy a delightful coolness, and where we hear the melody of various birds, feeds at the same time a multitude of animals, which will themselves serve for food to us. Those trees, the blossoms of which were a few months ago, so pleasing to the sight, will, soon supply us with delicious fruit; and those meadows, now covered with waving corn, will soon yield us a plentiful harvest. Nature presents no objects to us that are not pleasing and useful in more than one respect. The merciful care of Providence ordained that the color of green, the most mild and pleasing to the eye, should clothe and cover the earth. It was in itself agreeable to the sight, but variety might add charms to it. For this reason we see light and shade so happily distributed, those different degrees of color, and those various shades of green. How many different sorts of greens there are, which go from light to dark, by a thousand degrees! Each sort of plant has its regular and peculiar color. Landscapes covered with woods, bushes, greens, herbs, and corn, afford a magnificent scene of verdure, in which the tints of this color are infi-

nitely varied, mixed, cut, or blended insensibly, and yet are always in perfect harmony. Each month affords us different plants and flowers. Those that have served their purpose are replaced by others ; and thus successively prevent any void in the vegetable kingdom. But to whom do we owe these numerous and varied gifts of nature ? Who is he that provides for our wants and pleasures with such goodness and munificence ? Go and ask it of all nature : the hills and the valleys will tell thee ; the earth points him out to our sight ; the sky is a mirror in which we may behold him ; the storms and tempests proclaim him ; the voice of thunder, the rainbow, the rain, and the snow, declare his wisdom and goodness. The green fields, the meadows covered with gilded corn, the mountains crowned with forests, raising their heads to the very clouds, the trees laden with fruit, the gardens enamelled with flowers, the rose in its full beauty, all bear the impression of his handy work. And all the numerous host of animals which people the air, the earth, and the sea, declare the glory of the Almighty, and proclaim his existence. How unpardonable should we be, were we deaf to this general voice of nature ! Oh ! let us, that are happy witnesses of these wonders, let us, in the

presence of all his creatures, pay him that homage of gratitude and adoration so justly due to him. Those rich lands, where our flocks graze, those forests which afford us shade and fuel, that sky which is over us, and gives us light, every thing invites to grateful joy. Let our souls be filled with it. Let the sense of our happiness, and of God's blessings, attend us in our walks, and follow us into solitude. We shall find that there is no satisfaction more heartfelt, or more lasting, or more conformable to human nature, than the calm pleasures which the contemplation of the works of God affords.

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NATURE IS A LESSON FOR THE HEART.

————— "Meditate the book
Of Nature, ever open ; aiming thence
Warm from the heart, to learn the moral song."

THOMPSON.

WE gain, in every respect, by studying nature ; and it may, with reason, be called **A SCHOOL FOR THE HEART**, since it clearly instructs us in our duty towards God, our neighbor and ourselves.

Can any thing inspire us with more profound veneration towards God, than the reflection that it is he who has not only formed our globe out of nothing, but whose almighty hand also confines the sun within its orb, and the sea within its bounds ? Can we humble ourselves too much before that Being who created the innumerable worlds which roll over our heads ? Must we not shudder at the very thought of offending that God, of whose boundless power we every moment see proofs, and who with a single glance can destroy or make us wretched ?

But the contemplation of nature is highly calculated to fill us with love and gratitude towards

its Author. All nature loudly proclaims this comfortable truth, that *God is love*. It was love which induced him to create the world, and to communicate to other beings the felicity which he himself enjoys. Is there in reality a single creature, which does not furnish proofs of these beneficent regards? But particularly, if we reflect on ourselves, how many may we not find? The Creator has endowed us with reason, not only to enjoy his blessings, but to acknowledge also the love with which he honors us, and which enhances infinitely the value of his favors. Ought not so many blessings daily enjoyed, excite our most grateful love, and win our most constant obedience? And when we reflect on the admirable order, which reigns throughout all nature, ought it not to produce the best dispositions in our minds? If we are convinced that nothing can be pleasing to God, which is contrary to order and regularity, should we not conform to it? How unpardonable to oppose, by our irregularities, the merciful designs of Providence in our favor?

It is thus that nature becomes an excellent lesson for the heart. If we listen to it, we shall learn the true wisdom which leads to happiness.

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MEDITATION ON THE WORKS OF NATURE.

"Nature's replenish'd theatre survey—
Then, all on fire, the Author's skill adore,
And in loud songs extol creating power!"

BLACKMORE.

FATHER of the universe ! Preserver of all that breathe ! how great is thy majesty, and how many wonders thou shewest unto man ! It is thy hand which has stretched out the heavens, and set them thick with stars. Now, I behold the sun, shining in all its splendor, to reanimate nature. To-morrow, perhaps, it will be no more for me that the birds make the woods, the fields, and the vallies resound with their melodious notes. I feel that I am mortal ; my life fades away like the grass of the field : it withers as a leaf fallen from the branch where it grew. When the grave shall have swallowed me up, when darkness and silence come upon me ; what will then remain of my earthly possessions ? Will not all be lost to me, though even all my wishes had been gratified, and I had here enjoyed unmixed happiness ? O how senseless should I be, were I to attach myself to the transitory blessings of this

world ! If I aspired to great riches, if I was ambitious of empty honors, and if allowing myself to be dazzled by vain splendor, envy and pride should take possession of my heart ; if too eager in my wishes, I have pursued what I ought not to aspire to, I humble myself before thee, O God.

When, in the morn, on the green turf covered with dew, every thing presents me a cheerful prospect, and the wings of the night have cooled the burning heat of summer, wisdom cries out to me, O mortal ! why dost thou harbor cares ? Why yieldest thou thyself to anxiety ? Is not God thy Father ? Art not thou his child ? Will not he who made thee, take care of his own work ? The plan of thy existence is not limited to this earth, it embraces heaven. Life is but a moment ; and the longest earthly felicity is but a pleasing dream. O man ! thy destination is immortality. The thought of immortality raises us above the earth, the universe, and time. It shall awaken my heart, when seduced by false pleasures, I am inclined to quit the path of virtue. The roses which crown the head of the wicked soon fade. His shameful enjoyments dishonor him, and repentance succeeds them. I am but a sojourner upon earth, and none but immortal joys deserve pursuit.

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HYMN OF THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORKS OF
THE CREATOR.

— "Was every faltering tongue of man,
ALMIGHTY FATHER ! silent in thy praise,
Thy works themselves would raise a general voice,
Even in the depth of solitary woods
By human foot untrod, proclaim thy power,
And to the choir celestial THEE resound,
The eternal cause, support, and end of all !"

THOMPSON.

TO thee, O Lord ! from whom proceedeth
every blessing, and who dispensest them so boun-
tifully, to thee belong glory, honor, and thanks-
giving. Thou hearest the cries of the young
raven, and takest pleasure in the song of the lark ;
vouchsafe to listen also to my voice, and accept
the tribute of praise due to thee. The least of
the creatures formed by thy hand proclaims thy
wisdom. The traces of thy goodness and power
are seen from one end of the year to the other,
and are continually renewing. With parental
tenderness thou providest for our necessities, and
givest to men and animals their proper food.
It is in the hope of thy blessing, that the farmer
sows his corn : it is thou who makest the seed

fruitful. Thou waterest the furrows of the fields. Thou clothest the meadows, the valley, and the plain with flowers, and herbage, with trees and groves. Thou orderest the cool and refreshing dew to moisten our gardens and fields, and to shed on them fertility and abundance. The barren and dry soil thou waterest with gentle rains. The cold and wet places thou warmest with the rays of the sun. The weather and the seasons thou orderest in wisdom, and in the manner most beneficial to mankind. Thou coverest our fields with rich harvests, and the wings of the wind support the waving corn. Thou adornest the tops of barren rocks with grapes. Thou dressest our pasture with clover; and, by thy command, the fountains and streams water the thirsty animals. Thou causest the tree to take root, and it prospers. A quickening sap circulates through its trunk, and gives it force to branch out with leaves and blossoms; while the abundance of fruit, under which the boughs bend, proves the pleasure which thou hast in doing good. We, therefore, glorify thee, our Creator, our Benefactor! we bless thy holy name! All thy works are great, and good, and wonderful. We rejoice in thy goodness.

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GOD'S UNIVERSAL CARE OF HIS CREATURES.

"The holy power that clothes the senseless earth
With woods, with fruits, with flowers, and verdant grass,
Whose bounteous hands feed the whole brute creation,
Knows all our wants, and has enough to give us."

Rowe's Fair Penitent.

EVERY creature that lives in the air, in the water, or upon the earth, has its part in the care of a divine Providence, to which it owes its preservation. Animals void of reason are endowed with organs, strength, and sagacity, suitable to their several destinations. Instinct warns them of what might be hurtful or dangerous ; and enables them to seek, to distinguish, and to prepare the food and habitation proper for them. All this is absolutely involuntary. It is not the result of reflection. They are irresistibly led on by a propensity, which a superior Power has given them for the preservation of their animal life. They find the food, and the retreats convenient for them ; and no species of animals is destitute of what is necessary for its welfare and sustenance. Men are of a more excellent nature ; but they are born in a more helpless state ; and they require, beyond comparison, more assistance than

most other animals ; their wants, their faculties, their desires are more numerous and greater ; they are therefore distinguished by greater blessings, and more marked attentions of Providence. The earth, the air, and the water, the clouds, and the light of the celestial globes, contribute more abundantly, and in a more varied manner, towards their preservation. God has placed the irrational creatures under their command, in order to make them serve for their support and convenience. What particularly deserves our attention is, that every part of our globe which is inhabited, furnishes sufficient food for the creatures that live upon it. Admirable effects of divine Providence ! not only the fertile bosom of the earth, but also the vast plains of the air, and the depths of the sea, abound with food proper for the maintenance of the innumerable multitude of animals, that live and move in those elements. The treasures of divine goodness are inexhaustible !

The world does not decay. The sun returns with its accustomed light and heat : The fertility of the earth never diminishes : The seasons succeed regularly, and the earth never fails to pay its annual tribute of provision for the preservation and support of its innumerable inhabitants. Whether we consider the continuance of the pro-


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fusion, or the variety of the means of sustenance, which nature every where provides, we perceive throughout the traces of a beneficent and universal Providence. All things that surround us, and serve to sustain and procure us the sweets and pleasures of life, are so many visible means, so many channels through which our invisible Benefactor continually dispenses his favors. The agents of nature are the ministers which fulfil the designs of his providence. The world is his magazine, and we take out of it all that is necessary for use. It is to his goodness, it is to his tender mercies that we are indebted for it.

“ Father of all beings, how extensive are thy mercies, how great, how inexpressible ! In thee we live, move, and have our being ; and thou sustaineest all things by thy mighty word ! The lot of mortals is in thy hand : they are only happy through thee. Thou art their sovereign good ; and thy paternal cares are over all mankind. It is by thy command that the zephyr cools and refreshes us, that the rose embalms the air with its perfume, that the most delicious fruits please our palates, that the dew of heaven revives us. Thou proportionest thy gifts to the wants of thy creatures : Thou makest the righteous to feel the sweet and salutary effects of thy grace ! Thou givest to the

bee its nector in the flowers ; to the worm a drop to quench its thirst ; to the world the rays of the sun. O thou who possessest sovereign felicity, and dost not disdain to communicate happiness to the poorest insect, which could not exist a moment but by thy will ; permit me to raise to thee a new hymn, and deign to accept my weak lays ! Penetrated with joy and gratitude I will sing to thy name, magnify thy goodness, and pay thee due adoration, praise, and glory."



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DAILY PROOFS OF GOD'S GOODNESS.

"Almighty cause ! 'tis thy preserving care
That keeps thy works forever fresh and fair ;
Thy watchful Providence o'er all intends ;
Thy works obey their great Creator's ends."

BOYSE.

NOT to acknowledge the hand of Providence, but in extraordinary cases, is to betray our ignorance and weakness. In the ordinary course of nature things occur daily, which ought to excite our attention and admiration. The formation of a child is as great a miracle of the power and wisdom of God, as the creation of the first man formed out of the dust. Likewise the preservation of our life, if we reflect on the several causes and effects which combine for that purpose, is no less wonderful than the resurrection of the dead. The only difference between them is, that one happens but seldom, whilst we every day witness the other. This is the reason that it does not strike us more sensibly, or raise our admiration as it would otherwise do.

Undoubtedly my own experience ought to convince me fully that a divine Providence watches over the preservation of my days. I am not certain of a single moment of my life ; a thousand unknown and latent causes may hasten the end of

it, chill my blood, or stop my breath. Subject to so many evils, to so many wants both mental and corporal, I am thoroughly convinced that, were it not for the tender mercies of God, I should be a very wretched creature. The union of my body and soul, their reciprocal and continual action on each other are inconceivable, and depend neither on my will nor power. The beating of my pulse, the circulation of the fluids within me, goes on without interruption, and without my being able to contribute to it in the smallest degree. Every thing convinces me that my faculties, my state, the duration of my existence, do not depend on my will. If my breath be not yet stopped; if my blood still circulate; if my limbs have not yet lost their activity; if the organs of my senses have preserved their play; if in this instant I have the faculty of thinking and the use of my reason; it is to God alone that I am indebted for it. But why do I reflect so seldom, and with so little gratitude on the daily ways of Providence? Ought not the reflections which now offer themselves to have been always imprinted on my heart? Ought I not, at least, every morning and evening of my life to meditate on the benefits of my Creator; to admire and bless him for them? Divine preserver of my life! I regard thy providence, and confide in thy mercy; make me happy in thy favor!

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REASONS FOR CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

" O He is good, He is immensely good,
Who all things form'd, and form'd them all for man ;
Who mark'd the climates, varied every zone,
Dispensing all his blessings for the best,
In order and in beauty !"

SMART.

WHEN I reflect on the infinite perfections which are manifested in the plan of the universe, and on the manner in which God conducts and governs it, my confidence in him must necessarily be more and more increased and strengthened. How easy ought I to be in regard to my fate, since it is in the hands of that great Being, of whose power, wisdom, and goodness I have as many proofs as there are creatures before me ? What wishes could I form for my happiness, which might not be fulfilled by that God, whose unlimited power has been able to raise out of nothing so many millions of worlds ? Are there any troubles, sorrows, or difficulties, from which I may not be happily delivered by that infinite wisdom which has spread the heavens, and formed every creature in so wonderful a manner ? What can hinder me from committing my way unto the Lord ? What can

prevent me from having recourse to him in all my troubles and distresses, and from hoping that he will hear my prayer ? It is true that I am but a very weak creature ; I am lost in the vast multitude of his works ; and, when I represent to myself his greatness, and the infinite extent of his government, I often say to myself : Who am I that dare to hope that this great being will always listen to me, and that he will deign to cast his eyes on me, every time that I may have recourse to him ? But, on the other hand, I comfort myself, when I consider that his greatness, his majesty, and the government of so many millions of worlds, do not hinder him from extending his cares for the smallest worm. Why then may he not give some attention to me, who, though so insignificant, have received from him, both as a man, and as a Christian, prerogatives much superior to those of other creatures ? Here my conscience stops me, and reproaches me with being a sinner, with having, a thousand and a thousand times, wilfully transgressed the commands of my Creator and Maker ; and, that therefore I am more unworthy of his goodness than the most abject of his creatures. My conscience represents the justice of God to me in as strong colors as the whole universe paints to me his power and goodness. But it is here that

the salutary truths of the gospel come to my assistance. It is only through our Redeemer that I can look up to this God, whose greatness all the world proclaims ; that I can, I say, look up to him as a father, put my trust in him, and hope that he will grant me happiness, not only in this life, but to all eternity.



REASONS FOR CONTENT.

——— "Nature's skilful hand,
Drest up with sun and shade, and lawns and streams,
A mansion fair and spacious for its guest,
And full replete with wonders. Let me here,
Content and grateful, ripen for the skies."

MRS. BARBAULD.

LET sweet content take possession of our souls. God is good. Love and mercy shine through all his works. Let us contemplate his mighty deeds. The world, and all it contains, evidence his beneficence and wisdom. The heavens and the earth witness his power. The sun that rules by day, and the moon that shines by night, all things that have life or motion proclaim the mighty God. Consider the works of his hands. Men and brutes; even the objects that appear least in our eyes, the blade of grass, and the grain of sand, teach us to know him. Oh! how shall we worthily praise and exalt him, to whom we owe existence and life? Our bodies, and the souls which animate them, are gifts of his hands. If we are a prey to adversity, if oppressed with sorrows, scarce do we feel the weight of them, when God enables us

to support them. He grants us his assistance, and our evils are banished. O my soul thou hast long experienced this. Let me never forget it, nor give way to the fear of being deserted by a God, who cannot hate his children. Let us therefore submit to his holy will. Let us bless him for all his dispensations ; persuaded that he will accomplish all his merciful designs ; for he is great in wisdom, and abundant in means.



REFLECTIONS ON THE ANIMAL CREATION.

“ Who taught the nations of the field and wood
 To shun their poison, and to choose their food ?
 Prescient the tides, or tempests to withstand,
 Build on the wave, or arch beneath the sand ?—
 —God, in the nature of each being founds
 Its proper bliss, and sets its proper bounds.”

POPE.

WE may consider the animal kingdom as a well governed state, in which there are a proper number of inhabitants, each in the place appointed for them. In this animal kingdom, the little and the weak which compose the greatest part of it, are subject to the strong and the powerful ; but the whole are subject to man, as to the representative of the Deity. Animals find, in every part of the earth, enough to employ them, and enough to feed on. They are accordingly dispersed throughout every where ; and their nature, their organs, their several constitutions, are all adapted to the different situations designed them. Their employments differ greatly. All tend either to increase their species, to maintain an equal balance between the animal and the vegetable king-

dom, to provide proper food, or to defend themselves against their enemies. The Creator has given them an instinct to compensate for the want of reason. An instinct varied in a thousand ways, and according to their several wants ; an instinct for motion, for food, to enable them to distinguish it with certainty, to find it out, to seize upon it, and to prepare it ; instinct to build nests and proper habitations, to lay in provisions, to transform themselves ; instinct for the increase of their kind ; instinct to defend and secure themselves, &c. In each class of animals there are some which live on prey, and individuals which superabound in other classes. Each species has its particular enemies, which keep up the proper balance, and prevent any from multiplying too much. The sick animals, or those that have any defect, are generally the first which serve as food for others. The fruit and the carcases which corrupt are eaten up, the earth is not incommoded by them, nor the air infected. Thus nature preserves its beauty, freshness and purity. The beasts of prey have a make conformable to their destination. They are endowed either with peculiar strength, agility, industry, or address. But in order to prevent them from destroying whole species, they are confined within certain limits. They do not multiply so fast as other animals,

and they often mutually destroy each other, or their young serve as food for other creatures. Some sleep during winter, digest slowly, and feed on the productions of the earth for want of other food. The weaker animals are provided with defence in proportion to their situation, and the dangers to which they are exposed. Their natural arms, their swiftness, their habitations, their scales or shells, their cunning, preserve them from destruction ; and by these means the proper balance is always kept up, as to the number in every species of the brute creation.

The animals which give milk are the largest, and consequently the least numerous, but they fulfil very important offices. The smallest animals are the most numerous, and, in proportion, more voracious than the larger.

All we behold so admirable in the animal kingdom proves the existence of a Being who possesses the highest degree of wisdom and knowledge. Who but he could have peopled this immense globe with so many different species of living creatures, providing for them every thing necessary ? Who but he could give food to such infinite multitude of creatures according to their different tastes, and find them covering, habitations ;

and give them whatever they require to guard and defend them, which they effect with so much address and sagacity, so many instincts and such industry? Who but he could have kept up the equal balance between so many different species and classes of animals? Who but he could appoint for each living creature the element suited to it? or form that amazing number of limbs, joints, bones, muscles, and nerves joined together, and placed with so much art, harmony and perfection, that each animal can perform its several motions, in the manner most convenient and best adapted to its way of life, and the different situations in which it is placed?


O Lord God Almighty! it is thou only who couldst do such things, and to thee belongeth all glory, praise and thanksgiving.

THE SPHERICAL FORM OF THE EARTH.

"The form orbicular of earth he prov'd—
How in the ambient air 'twas pois'd and mov'd,
How day and night alternate hence appear,
And varying seasons grace the rolling sphere."

PEOPLE generally suppose the earth an even plain, a round flat surface ; but if that were the case the exterior limits of this surface would be found out ; and in approaching any place, it would be impossible to see the tops of towers and mountains before the lower parts of them. The earth then must be a globe ; but it is not exactly and strictly spherical, for it is a little more raised at the equator and flatter towards the two poles, nearly resembling an orange. But that deviation from a spherical form is very inconsiderable, at most only thirty-four miles, which is scarcely perceptible in a globe, whose circumference is about twenty-five thousand miles, and diameter seven thousand nine hundred and twenty-eight. There will be no doubt of the figure of the earth being nearly spherical, if we consider that, in the eclipses of the moon, the shadow which the earth casts on that

planet is always round. Besides, if the earth were not round, how could they have sailed round it, or how should the stars rise and set sooner in the eastern than in the western countries? Here, again, is the wisdom of the Creator manifest. The form which he has given to the earth is the most proper and convenient for a world like ours, and for its inhabitants. Light and heat, so necessary for the preservation of creatures here, by this mean, equally and uniformly distributed over the whole earth. From thence, also, proceed the daily and annual returns of night and day, heat and cold, wet and dry, so constant and regular. The water, in the first place, is equally distributed over the globe, and the salutary use of the winds is felt over every part of the earth. We should be deprived of all those advantages if our earth had any other form. In some countries it would be a paradise, in others a chaos; one part of it would be swallowed up in water, the other burnt up with the heat of the sun. In certain countries they would be exposed to furious tempests, which would destroy every thing, whilst they would be stifled in other places by the want of air, the current of which would be nearly stopped. One part of the earth would enjoy the benign influence of the sun, whilst the other would be frozen with cold. What pride and ignorance should we not betray, if we

did not acknowledge in this the hand of an almighty and beneficent Creator? Should we deserve to inhabit a world, where all is so wisely ordained, if, like the brutes, we were insensible to this admirable plan, and to the numberless blessings which accrue from it? No, my God and my Creator, let us never be guilty of such monstrous ingratitude. Filled with astonishment and admiration at the  of thy works, we adore thy wisdom.



UTILITY OF MOUNTAINS.

" See how sublime the uplifted mountains rise,
And with their pointed heads invade the skies,
How the high cliffs their craggy arms extend,
Distinguish States and sever'd Realms defend :
From intercepted clouds collect the rain—
And furnish springs and rivers for the plain."

BLACKMORE.

WOULD it not be more advantageous to our globe, if its surface were not so uneven, and if it were not disfigured by so many mountains? We sometimes think that the form of the earth would be much more regular, that our sight would extend farther, that we should travel more conveniently, and enjoy many other advantages, if the earth were only one vast plain. But, perhaps, we are mistaken in this opinion. Let us then inquire into it, and reflect on the use of mountains, in order to see if there be any reason to be discontented with the present arrangement of our globe.

In the first place, it is evident that it is from the mountains and hills that the springs flow, which are produced either by heavy snows, or by the

clouds with which those heights are often covered. They keep up the courses of great and small rivers. Those chains of high mountains which extend from east to west, and which traverse a great tract of country, serve to prevent the dispersion of vapours, and to condense them into water. They are as so many stills, which prepare and render the water sweet, for the use of man and beast. Their declivity gives a moderate fall to the springs, and thence they flow gently into the vallies, which they water and fertilize. Besides this inestimable advantage of springs and fountains which the mountains procure us, they have many others. They serve for dwellings and afford subsistence to several kinds of animals which are useful to us. On the sides of mountains there grow trees, plants, and an innumerable quantity of salutary herbs and roots, which are not cultivated with equal success in the plains, or have not the same virtues. It is in the bowels of the mountains that metals and minerals are formed. Mountains are, in a manner, the bulwarks of nature, to shelter countries against the fury of seas and storms; and, like ramparts and natural fortifications, they protect several states from the invasion of enemies, and the ambition of conquerors. They perhaps preserve the balance of our globe. It is true that some of these mountains are dangerous and formidable.

They occasion many shocks and earthquakes ; and the volcanoes spread flames and destruction all around. But though there should be some inconveniences from them, yet these cannot furnish any reasonable objection against the wisdom and goodness of God ; since the blessings which we derive from them are greatly superior to the evils which they occasion. In this respect, then, we have no reason to complain of the contrivance of our globe. If there were no mountains we should be deprived of several sorts of stones and fossils. There would be no rivers, no springs, no lakes. We should want a great number of the finest and most salutary plants, and several sorts of animals. The privation of one single thing in nature might be sufficient to make our lives sad and miserable. Let us therefore conclude that mountains, as well as every other part of nature, prove the wisdom, power, and goodness of the Creator.

UTILITY OF RAIN.

"The shadowing clouds distill the genial rain
Whose copious waters cheer the thirsty plain."

IN the truest sense of the word rain deserves to be called a present from heaven. The blessings which our heavenly Father pours upon us by this mean are equally abundant and necessary for us. As the consequences of a continued drought would be fatal to us, so the advantages are equally precious which the refreshing showers afford.

The heat of the sun acts without interruption on the different bodies on the earth, and continually exhales thin particles from it, which fill the atmosphere in the form of vapours. We should breathe those dangerous exhalations with the air, if now and then they were not carried off by the rain, which precipitates them upon the earth, and thus clears and purifies the air. It is not less useful in moderating the burning heat of the atmosphere; and the reason is very evident; for the nearer the air is to the earth, the more it is warmed by the reflection of the sun's rays; and the far-

ther it is from us the colder it is. The rain that falls from a higher region, brings to the lower a refreshing coolness, of which we always feel the agreeable effects when it has rained. It is also to the rain that we must partly impute the origin of fountains, wells, lakes, and rivers. Every body knows in what abundance we are supplied with those several sources of water in the wet and rainy seasons; whereas they evaporate during a long drought. But to feel how useful and necessary rain is, we need only observe how the earth and vegetables languish for want of these fruitful showers, without which every thing would perish. Rain is in many respects the food of vegetables. It circulates in the finer veins, and in the vessels of plants and trees, and conveys to them those beneficial juices which preserve their life and give them growth. When it pours on mountains, it sweeps from them a soft rich earth, which it deposits in the vallies where it falls, and which it fertilizes.

God has planned all with wisdom, and the earth is full of his goodness. Such is, without doubt, the conclusion that we must all draw from these reflections. And if from these we be led to adore and bless him, let us pursue the subject, that it may make a deeper impression on our minds.

What finer object can be presented to our sight than a clear and serene sky ! Is not that beautiful vault extended over us sufficient to fill every heart with admiration and delight ? But all the beauties of the sky would disappear, if, by the direction of the winds, the clouds should come and draw a thick curtain before us. What are the sentiments which such a revolution would create in us ? These are at least what it ought to inspire ;—However beautiful this scene which we contemplate with such delight, there are some incomparably greater, of which no cloud can deprive us, and which would make us ample amends for the loss of all others. For what are all the beauties of nature compared to the beauty of that great Being, in whose contemplation alone an immortal spirit can find felicity ! It is not without design that God sometimes deprives us for a while of those things which give us most pleasure. He then teaches us to seek our happiness in him, and to consider him as our sovereign good. Besides, are not those very privations often compensated by many outward advantages ? Those clouds which conceal from us the beauty of the sky, are the sources of beneficent rains, which render the earth fruitful. Let us remember this ; and every time that adversity makes our days gloomy and

melancholy, let us be persuaded that even these misfortunes will become, in the hands of our heavenly Father, instruments of future happiness. Let us also consider rain as the image of the gifts of fortune : For beneficial as moderate rains may be they are equally hurtful if they last too long, or come unseasonably. So it is in respect to earthly goods, too great abundance of which might be the cause of our destruction. Let us therefore thank our heavenly Father for refusing us gifts, which we might afterwards find to be real punishments. Let us learn to be content with all the dispensations of a wise and gracious Providence in the government of the world. God only can know the manner in which his blessings can best be bestowed. He sendeth forth his commandments to the clouds, and they fly to execute the will of their Creator. Shall man dare to undertake to direct their course, though perhaps the least considerable part in the ordinance of the world? How then can we be rash enough to blame the ways of Providence on much more important occasions?

UTILITY OF RIVERS.

" See how the streams advancing to the main
Through crooked channels draw their crystal train,
While lingering thus they in meanders glide
They scatter verdant life on either side."

BLACKMORE.

WHEN we calculate the space which the rivers take up in our globe, we find that they deprive us of a great part of the continent. Some are discontent at this, and suppose that it would be better if there had been fewer rivers, and more land. But if they would only consider, with what wisdom, and in what due proportion the Creator has planned every thing upon our globe, they would conclude, that rivers have not been spread over the earth without good reason, and essential utility to men and other creatures.

It must be observed, in the first place, that the water of rivers affords a very wholesome drink to man. Spring or pump water, when it has been long and without motion under ground, loosens and insensibly carries away with it some particles which may prove hurtful to the body ; but river

water, which is continually evaporating, and always in motion, is purified from all dirt, and by that means becomes the most salubrious drink for men or beasts.

However, the utility of rivers extends still farther. Is it not to them that we owe the cleanliness, the wholesomeness, and comfort of our houses, as well as the fertility of our fields? Our habitations are always unhealthy, when they are surrounded by stagnant water, and by marshes, or when the want of water occasions a drought. The smallest rivulet cools the air around it, and makes it extremely agreeable; and what an astonishing difference between a country well watered, and one to which nature has denied this assistance! One is a barren dry desert; the other, on the contrary, is in some sort a garden of delights, where woods and vallies, meadows and fields, present a thousand beauties, and the most pleasing variety,

How useful are they to commerce! Of how many machines and mills should we be deprived, if they were not put in motion by rivers! How many kinds of delicate fish we should want, if they did not furnish us with abundance of them!

But, it will be said, if there were no rivers, we should escape those inundations which do so much

mischief. But is this inconvenience sufficient to prevent rivers from being a blessing of Providence? Do not the numberless advantages which accrue from them much exceed the harm which they sometimes occasion? Inundations seldom happen, and they extend over very little country. Besides, those very inundations, enrich and fertilize the ground; and, to an attentive observer, they are a proof that God blesses with one hand, whilst he appears to chasten with the other. Thus, then, the rivers ought to convince us of that divine goodness which is over all the earth.

OF THE OCEAN.

"The Sea does next demand our view, and there
No less the marks of perfect skill appear.
What, but a conscious agent, could provide
The spacious hollow where the waves reside?
Where barr'd with rock, and fenc'd with hills, the deep
Does in its womb the floating treasures keep;
And all the raging regiments restrain
In stated limits, that the swelling main
May not in triumph o'er the frontier ride,
And through the land licentious spread its tide."

BLACKMORE.

THE Ocean is that general collection of waters
which surrounds the whole earth.

The chief things observable of it are its *vastness*,
which is so considerable as to cover nearly two
thirds of the surface of the globe; its *depth*; its
saltness; and its *tides*.

Its *depth* is not equal. In some places naviga-
tors can find no bottom with a line of more than
seven hundred and eighty fathom.*

* The Compiler is happy in knowing that the subject of
the deepness of the ocean has employed the investigation of
the HON. JAMES WINTHROP, Esq. of Cambridge; from
whom the public may expect some ingenious, learned, and
philosophic disquisitions upon this and other particulars in
Physics which have discouraged or baffled former inquirers.

The ocean is *salt* in all parts of the world : but the degree of saltness differs much in different climates, and is greatest in the equatorial regions, where the heat of the sun is greatest, and consequently the evaporation of the water greatest. In the process of evaporation the saline particles are left behind, and hence the degree of saltness is increased.

The *cause* of the saltness of the ocean has been a subject of inquiry among philosophers in almost all ages, but it still remains undetermined.

As no accurate observations on the *degree* of saltness in particular latitudes were made till the present century, it is not possible to ascertain what was the state of the sea at any considerable distance of time, nor consequently whether its degree of saltness increases, decreases or is stationary.

For this property there appears an exceedingly wise and good reason. Fresh water must be in continual and quick motion to keep it from putrifying and stinking ; but the channels of the ocean are so large as render them incapable of a swift current ; so that it can have no more motion than is given it by the winds, the reciprocation of the tides, and the revolution of the earth about its own

axis. To compensate this want of motion, therefore, the water is made salt, which produces the same effect as motion would do, and is separated from it when it is exhaled into vapours.

Of the *ebb* and *flood* of the ocean a more particular account will be given in the next article.

As the earth is full of the divine riches so is this great and wide sea. It is not an useless waste of waters, as some may ignorantly imagine. It is the grand reservoir whence the sun exhales the vapours, to lay them up in clouds as in store houses, to descend again in showers or sprinkling dews, to refresh the thirsty earth and nourish vegetation.

Again ; it is owing to the vastness of the ocean that the several countries all over the face of the earth are so well supplied with streams and rivers. And we may observe that instead of being a means of separation between distant countries, it is indeed the centre of commerce for all nations. For, whereas people could not go by land from one end of the world to the other without infinite fatigue, and numberless dangers ; but, by crossing the ocean in ships, the old world holds connection with the new, and they mutually supply each other with the comforts and conveniences of life.

* "Hail, thou inexhaustible source of wonder and contemplation ! Hail, thou multitudinous ocean ! whose waves chase one another down like the generations of men, and, after a momentary space, are immersed forever in oblivion ! Thy fluctuating waters wash the varied shores of the world, and while they disjoin nations whom a nearer connection would involve in eternal war, they circulate their arts and their labors, and give health and plenty to mankind.

"How glorious, how awful are the scenes thou displayest ! Whether we view thee when every wind is hushed, when the morning silvers the level line of the horizon, or when its evening tract is marked with flaming gold, and thy unrippled bosom reflects the radiance of the overarching heavens ! or whether we behold thee in thy terrors ; when the black tempest sweeps thy swelling billows, and the boiling surge mixes with the clouds ; when death rides the storm, and humanity drops a fruitless tear for the toiling mariner whose heart is sinking with dismay !

"And yet, mighty deep ! 'tis thy *surface* alone we view. Who can penetrate the secrets of thy

* This elegant apostrophe is taken from KRAATZ's *Sketches of Nature*.

WORKS OF NATURE.

wide domain? What eye can visit thy immense rocks and caverns, that teem with life and vegetation? Or search out the myriads of objects, whose beauties lie scattered over thy dread abyss?

“The mind staggers with the immensity of its own conceptions: and, when it contemplates the flux and reflux of thy tides, which from the beginning of the world were never known to err, how does it shrink at the idea of that divine power which originally laid thy foundations so sure, and whose omnipotent voice hath fixed the limits where thy proud waves shall be stayed!”

ON THE TIDES.

" So the moon charms her watery world below,
Wakes the still seas, and makes them ebb and flow."

LEE.

" God to the silver moon this province gave,
And fix'd her empire o'er the briny wave ;
Endu'd her with such just degrees of power,
As might his aims and wise designs procure,—
Might agitate and work the troubled deep,
And rolling waters from corruption keep ;
But not impel them o'er their bounds of sand,
Nor force the wasteful deluge o'er the land."

BLACKLOCK.

THE greatest part of the surface of the earth is covered with water, which is called the sea ; and that immense collection is very distinct from lakes and rivers. These contain more or less water, according to the different seasons ; whereas in the sea the quantity of water is almost always the same ; but we observe the sea increase and decrease twice every day, according to certain rules. When it comes to a certain height in a port it soon begins to decrease : This decrease continues for six hours, and the sea is then at the lowest ebb. At the end of six hours it begins again to rise, and this increase lasts also six hours ; at the end of which the

sea has again attained its greatest height. Then it sinks again for six hours, to swell again for the same time ; so that in the space of twenty-four hours the sea twice rises and falls, and is alternately at the greatest and least height. This regular and alternate motion of the sea, which rises towards the shore and withdraws again, is called flux and reflux.

When the sea swells and rises towards the coasts it is called the flux ; and the return of the water towards the main is called the reflux. It is a remarkable circumstance that the tide is regulated according to the course of the moon. The tide is greater and rises higher towards the time of the new and full moon, and is lower during the quarters. The motion of it is also much more considerable in Spring and Autumn than in the other seasons. On the contrary, the tides are much weaker during the solstices. This phenomenon is particularly observable in the ocean, where the water fills a great space ; but is much less so in limited seas, such as the Mediterranean. Finally, the interval between the flux and reflux is not exactly six hours ; it is eleven minutes more ; so that these revolutions do not happen the next day, at the same moment, but three quarters of an hour later. They do not return, at the same hour, till the end of thirty days, which is the time from one

new moon to another. What may be concluded on with certainty, from this constant and regular phenomenon, is that the flux and reflux have some connection with the motions of the moon. Tides are occasioned by the attraction of the sun and moon, and especially of the moon. It is always a pardonable ignorance not to be able to explain perfectly the laws and the course of nature ; but it is an inexcusable want of attention and gratitude not to reflect on the happy effect which those laws, and those great phenomena, have upon our earth, or to forget what we owe to the beneficent Father of Nature. One great advantage which we have from this perpetual waving of the waters, is to prevent it from stagnating or corrupting by lying still. It is true that the wind also contributes to it, but, as there is often a perfect calm in the water, there might result from it a putrefaction in the basin of the sea, which is the reservoir for all the waters of the earth to flow into. God has therefore ordered the flux and reflux to prevent hurtful things settling there. The motion of the water rising and falling, attenuates and separates those corrupted waters ; and in order to preserve the sea in its purity the flux and reflux mix and disperse the salt, of which it is full, and which would otherwise sink quickly to the bottom.

The phenomena of the tides have been well investigated and satisfactorily explained by Sir Isaac Newton and Dr. Halley, from the reciprocal gravitations of the earth, moon, and sun. As the earth and moon move round a centre of motion near the earth's surface, at the same time that they are proceeding in their annual orbit round the sun, it follows that the water on the side of the earth nearest this centre of motion between the earth and moon will be more attracted by the moon, and the waters on the opposite side of the earth will be less attracted by the moon, than the central parts of the earth. Add to this that the centrifugal force of the water on the side of the earth farthest from the centre of the motion, round which the earth and moon move (which as was said before, is near the surface of the earth) is greater than on the opposite side of the earth. From both these causes it is easy to comprehend that the water will rise on two sides of the earth, viz. on that nearest to the moon, and its opposite side, and that it will be flattened in consequence at the quadratures; and thus produce two tides in every lunar day, which consists of about twenty-four hours and forty-eight minutes.

These tides will also be affected by the solar attraction when it coincides with the lunar one, or

opposes it, as at new and full moon ; and will also be much influenced by the opposing shores in every part of the earth.

When the sun and moon are in the syzygies,* or in opposition and conjunction, at the time of the equinoxes, we have the highest tides of all, because then the sun is in the plane of the equator, and the moon the same or very nearly so. But, as the earth is nearer to the sun in winter than in summer, these tides happen rather *before* the vernal equinox, and *after* the autumnal.

Let us now consider who has adjusted the motions of that unruly element with so much exactness and proportion ? A little more motion in the vast flood would drown whole kingdoms. Must it not then be a skilful, a divine hand, that has set to the sea its unmoveable boundary, which it has kept through a series of so many ages, and said to its proud waves, *hitherto shall you come, and no farther ?*

These reflections may also naturally remind us of a circumstance, which is much connected with this phenomenon : Our life is but a flux and reflux.

* These are the points of the Moon's orbit in which she is at *new* and *full*.

It increases and decreases : Every thing is inconstant, and liable to change. Nothing is durable. There is no permanent joy, hope, or happiness. We swim in a rapid and inconstant river : Let us then take care not to be drawn into the abyfs ; and let us endeavor to gain the happy port, the smiling and cheerful shores. On the other hand, let us bless God that our evils and anxieties are of short duration. An excessive and lasting grief or pain is as little compatible with our nature as a constant and perfect happiness. These changes are certainly an advantage to us. If we enjoyed, through the whole course of our lives, an uninterrupted felicity, we might easily grow proud, and forget God. As, on the other hand, a continual train of disgraces and misfortunes would sink us entirely, and harden our hearts. Let us then bless our heavenly Father for his wise decrees ; and endeavor to conduct ourselves through life, in prosperity or adversity, in a manner worthy of our faith, and the hope of everlasting life.

EARTHQUAKES.

" Know then, within this globe's capacious womb
 Are veins of living fire—imprison'd air—
 Sulphureous streams with strong bitumen mix'd;
 These meeting and fermenting, next explode,
 All wild and rapid, through the laboring earth,
 They pour resistless; burst the solid cliffs,
 And, through the yawning void that whirls at once
 The tumbling city, mount and melt in air."

OGILVIE.

OUR earth suffers two kinds of shocks; one is occasioned by the action of subterraneous fires, and by the explosion of volcanos. These commotions are felt only at small distances, and only when the volcanos work before the entire eruption. As soon as the matter which forms the subterraneous fires comes to ferment and blaze, the fire makes an effort on all sides; and if it do not naturally find a vent, it raises the earth and makes itself a passage by throwing it up with violence. But this sort of earthquakes extends only for the space of a few miles. They shake the earth like the explosion of a magazine of powder, which produces a shock, and a sensible commotion at several leagues distance. But there is another sort of earthquakes,

very different in the effect, and perhaps in the cause also. I mean those terrible ones which are felt at great distances, and which shake a long track of ground, without any new volcano, or any eruption appearing. There are instances of earthquakes which have been felt at the same time in England, France and Germany. Those extend much more in length than in breadth. They shake a chain or zone of land, with more or less violence in different parts, and are generally attended with a hollow noise like a heavy carriage rolling with rapidity.

The following observations may explain the causes of this sort of earthquakes: All inflammable matter susceptible of explosion produces (as powder does) a great quantity of air, or elastic fluid. The air produced by fire is so very much rarified that it must cause very violent effects, when it has been long shut up and compressed in the bowels of the earth. Suppose then that at a very considerable depth, there should be combustible matter which should take fire by some means; it must of course seek a vent; and if it find none it occasions the most violent shocks. It is impossible to express how fatally dreadful this sort of earthquakes is. Of all the desolations, of all the catastrophes upon earth, there are none so

formidable, so destructive, and which so much baffle all human foresight and prudence, as these earthquakes. When rivers overflow their banks, and sweep away whole villages, there is still some resource ; it is possible to escape upon mountains, or to the upper part of houses : whereas the calamity of which we speak extends itself with an irresistible power over a whole country, and swallows up whole kingdoms and people, without leaving the smallest trace behind.

Lord God Almighty, who can stand before thee, when thou displayest thy power ! The earth trembles before thee, and is shaken. The foundations of the mountains are troubled, and quake when thy anger is kindled. The mountains tremble and the hills vanish. The earth quakes at thy presence, and all who inhabit it. Thy anger spreads like fire, and the rocks are split asunder before thee. Who would not fear thee, O Ruler of the earth ! Yes, Lord, we acknowledge and adore thy sovereign Majesty. Thy judgments are incomprehensible ; but, at the same time, thou art good and merciful in all thy dispensations.

Lastly, let us be convinced that every thing frightful or terrible in nature, all the apparent evil, all the imperfections of the world, have a wise

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intent. Great and Almighty Being, I will therefore adore and bless thy name, even when thou sendest thy plagues, and scatterest terror and desolation on the earth. I will do more. I will rest with sure confidence upon thy fatherly care. Though even the world should be destroyed, though the mountains should fall and sink into the sea, thou shouldest still be my support, my strength, and my refuge. Let me only possess a good conscience, and I shall find nothing in nature terrible.

SUNRISE.

—“Yonder comes the powerful king of day,
Rejoicing in the east. The lessening cloud,
The kindling azure, and the mountain's brow
Illum'd with fluid gold, his near approach
Betoken glad.”

THOMPSON.

HAVE you ever been a witness of the superb phenomenon which the rising sun each day affords? Or has idleness, the love of sleep, or a faulty indifference, prevented you from contemplating this wonder of nature? Perhaps you may be ranked amongst the multitude of people who never thought a sight of the Aurora worth the sacrifice of some hours sleep. Perhaps you are like many others, who, satisfied with the light of the sun, do not trouble themselves with inquiring into the cause of this great effect. Or lastly, perhaps you are as insensible as millions of your fellow creatures, who have it in their power to behold this glorious object every day, see it without being struck with it, or without its raising any idea

or pleasing reflection in their minds. It matters little in which of these you rank. Suffer yourself only to be now at last roused from this state of insensibility, and learn what thoughts the sight of the morning sun ought to excite in your soul. There is no phenomenon in nature more beautiful and splendid. The richest dress that human art can invent, the finest decorations, the most pompous equipage, the most superb ornaments in the palaces of kings, vanish and sink to nothing when compared to this beauty of nature. At first, it is the eastern region of the sky which is clothed in the purple of Aurora, and announces the sun's approach. The air by degrees takes the bloom of a rose, and then shines with the lustre of gold. Afterwards the rays of the sun pierce through the mist, and with them light and heat are spread over the whole horizon. At last the sun appears in all the splendor of majesty. It rises visibly higher and higher, and the earth assumes a different aspect. Every creature rejoices, and seems to receive a new life. The birds, with songs of joy, salute the source of light and day. Every animal begins to move ; and all feel themselves animated with new strength and spirits.

Bless the Lord, O my soul ! Let my songs of
praise also reach to the heavens where dwells the
Almighty, by whose command the sun rises, and
whose hand so guides its daily and its annual
course as to produce the happy revolution of day
and night and the regular succession of the seasons !
Raise thyself to the Father of lights, and proclaim
his majesty !



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THE RAINBOW.

—“refracted from yon eastern cloud,
Bestriding earth, the grand ethereal bow
Shoots up immense ; and every hue unfolds,
In fair proportion running from the red
To where the violet fades into the sky.”

THOMPSON.

WHEN the sun reflects its rays on drops of water which fall from the clouds, and we are placed with our backs to the sun, and with the clouds opposite to us, we observe a rainbow. We may consider the drops of rain as little transparent balls, on which the rays fall, and are twice refracted or broken and once reflected. Hence proceed the colors in the rainbow. They are seven in number, and in the following order : red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, and violet. These colors appear so much the more lively, as the cloud behind is darker, and the drops of rain fall the closer. The drops falling continually produce a new rainbow every moment, and, as each spectator has his particular situation whence he observes this phenomenon, it so happens, that two men

cannot, properly speaking, see the same rainbow. This meteor can last only so long as the drops of rain that fall are continually replaced by others. To consider a rainbow merely as a phenomenon of nature, it is one of the finest sights imaginable. It is a picture the most beautifully colored of any which the Creator has exposed to our sight. But when we reflect that God has made this meteor a sign of his pardon, and of the covenant which he vouchsafed to make with mankind, we find subject for more than one edifying reflection. Again ; I have the rain pouring down before me, and the sun shining behind me. Such is the image of my life ! My face is often bathed in tears ; but at the same time rises upon me the sun of righteousness, with cheering and reviving beams.

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USE AND NECESSITY OF AIR.

" Remark the Air's transparent element,
Its curious structure, and its vast extent !
Its wonderous web proclaims the loom divine,
Its threads, the hand that drew them out so fine.
Its open meshes let terrestrial steams
Pass through, entic'd away by solar beams ;
And thus a road reciprocal display
To rising vapours and descending day.
This thin, this soft contexture of the air
Shows the wise Author's providential care,
Who did the filmy structure so contrive
That it might life to breathing creatures give ;
Might re-inspire, and make the circling mass
Through all its winding channels fit to pass."

BLACKMORE.

AIR is that subtle and elastic fluid which pervades and surrounds all our globe. Without recapitulating the innumerable benefits derived from it in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, in the arts of life, and in the texture and cohesion even of inanimate bodies ; we shall observe, in general, that it is essentially necessary to the existence of every animal and vegetable. Not only men, quadrupeds, birds, fishes, reptiles, and the larger insects, but even fleas, mites, and the minute

eels found in paste or in vinegar, and the animalcules produced by infusing animal or vegetable substances in water, inevitably perish when deprived of this all-vivifying element.

Even plants are furnished with numerous air vessels, or respiratory organs. They absorb and transmit air through every pore : and this element is so necessary to their existence that they do not vegetate in an exhausted receiver.

In short, air is of use to the life and breathing of all animated beings ; to the vegetation of plants ; to the motion of winged animals ; to the formation of vapours, rain, and winds ; to the raising and dispersing of those noxious effluvia which exhale from different bodies ; to the propagation and conveyance of sounds, and to give us the sense of hearing. Without air we could not be able to converse with each other, we should have no music, no smell, no light.

As the air we continually breathe is an universal menstruum, and of course liable to be impregnated with exhalations from every substance to which it has access, the great importance of personal as well as of domestic cleanliness is an obvious reflection. In building towns or houses, the

situation, with regard to air, is a capital object. The vicinity of marshes ; of stagnating waters ; of manufactures of tallow, oil, &c. of butchers' stalls ; and of many other work houses where filth is generated and air contaminated, should be avoided or removed ; as they are the pests of our senses and the poisoners of our constitutions.



REFLECTIONS ON WOODS AND FORESTS.

"Shade above shade, a woody theatre.—
How many are the trees of God that grow
With leaves to heal us, and with fruit to feed!"

MILTON.

THE woods form one of the finest pictures which the surface of the earth presents to our eyes. It is true, that at first sight, it is a wild sort of beauty. One only sees thickets of trees, and a dull solitude. But to a well informed observer, who thinks every thing beautiful that is good and useful, there will appear a thousand objects in them worthy attention. Nothing invites us more to reflect on the grandeur and beauty of nature than a solitary wood. The pleasing *shade and silence*, we enjoy, lead us to collect our thoughts, and awaken the imagination. The *number and variety* of the trees are the first objects which attract our eyes. They are less distinguished by their difference of height than by their different *stems, forms, and leaves*; the resinous pine does not excel in the beauty of its leaves; they are narrow and pointed, but they last a long time, like the fir, and they preserve their verdure in winter.

The foliage of the linden tree, the ash, and the beech, is much more beautiful and varied : their green is admirable ; it relieves and charms the sight. The broad indented leaves of some of these trees form a fine contrast with the narrow fibrous leaves of others. We have but an imperfect knowledge of their manner of multiplying, and the use of their fruit. How numberless the ways in which *wood* is useful ? The slow growing oak, the leaves of which are later than any other tree, affords the hardest and strongest wood ; which art has taught the carpenter, joiner, and carver, to work into a variety of useful forms, so durable as to seem to defy time. Lighter wood serves for other purposes ; and, as it is in more plenty, and grows quicker, it is also of more general use. It is to the forest trees we owe our houses, ships, and fuel, with many conveniences for furniture. It is our chief and most natural fuel, to dress our food and keep us warm, as well as for other necessities of life. The industry of man has taught him to polish, shape, turn, carve, and form wood into a multitude of things equally elegant and solid.

Divine wisdom has dispersed woods and forests in more or less abundance all over the earth. In some countries they are at great distances ; in

others they take up several leagues, and raise their majestic heads to the clouds. The scarcity of wood in certain countries is compensated by its abundance in others. Neither the constant use made of it so lavishly by mankind, nor the ravages of accidental fires, nor severe winters have yet exhausted these rich gifts of nature ; for even a few scattered trees, and humble copse, produce a forest in the short space of twenty years.

Is not the power and goodness of God visible in all this ? How superior is his wisdom ! If we had assisted at the creation, possibly we should have made many objections to woods and forests ; we might have preferred orchards and fertile fields. But the infinitely wise Being foresaw the several wants of his creatures in their different situations. He vouchsafed to think of us before we could feel our wants, or were able to express them. He anticipated all of them. It is not left to the care of man to plant or keep up forests. Most other things are obtained only by labor. The ground must be ploughed and seeds must be sown. It costs the farmer much trouble and labour. But God has reserved to himself the trees of the forests. It is he who plants and preserves them. They grow and multiply independent of our care. They repair their losses continually by new shoots, and

there is always enough to supply our wants. To be convinced of this, we need only cast our eye on the seed of the linden tree, the maple, and elm. From these little seeds spring up those vast bodies which raise their heads to the very clouds. It is thou Almighty! that fixest and maintainest them during ages against the force of winds and tempests. It is thou that sendest dew and rain sufficient to make them annually renew their verdure, and in some measure to keep up a kind of immortality amongst them.

O man! thou art overloaded with blessings. Lift up thine eyes towards the great Being who takes pleasure in doing thee good! The forests are monuments of his bounty, and thou must be guilty of the greatest ingratitude, if thou art insensible to a blessing of which every moment may remind thee.

CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE STARRY HEAVENS.

— "Ye shining hosts
 That navigate a sea that knows no storms
 Beneath a vault unfullied with a cloud,—
 Ye, from your lofty elevation view,
 Distinctly, scenes invisible to man,
 And systems, of whose birth no tidings yet
 Have reach'd this nether world."

COWPER.

THE sky at night present to us a sight of wonders, which must raise the astonishment of every attentive observer. But whence comes it that so few consider the firmament with attention? I am willing to believe that, in general, it proceeds from ignorance; for it is impossible to be convinced of the greatness of the works of God without feeling a rapture almost heavenly.

Raise your thoughts, towards the sky. It will be enough to name to you the immense bodies which are strewed in that space, to fill you with astonishment at the greatness of the artificer. It is in the center of our system that the sun is established. That body is more than a million of times larger than the earth. It is above ninety-five millions of miles distant from it, and notwith-

standing this prodigious distance, has a most sensible effect upon our globe. Round the sun move twenty-one globular bodies, seven of which are called *planets*, the other fourteen *moons* or *satellites*; they are opaque, and receive from the sun, light, heat, and perhaps also their interior motion, *Herschel*, *Saturn*, *Jupiter*, *Mars*, the *Earth*, *Venus*, and *Mercury*, are the names of the seven principal planets. Of these seven *Mercury* is nearest the sun, being at the distance of about thirty-seven millions of miles; and for that reason is mostly invisible to the astronomer. As he is about fourteen times smaller than our earth, he contributes but little to adorn the sky. *Venus* follows him, and is sometimes called the morning and sometimes the evening star. It is one of the brightest of the heavenly bodies, whether it precedes the rising or succeeds the setting sun. It is somewhat smaller than the earth, and is about sixty-eight millions of miles distant from the sun. After *Venus* comes our *earth*, round which the moon moves, as a secondary planet. *Mars*, which is the fourth planet, is three times smaller than our globe; and its distance from the sun is one hundred and forty-four millions of miles. *Jupiter*, with its belts is always distinguished by its splendor in the starry sky: It seems in size to surpass all the fixed stars; it is almost as bright as *Venus* in all her glory, except that the light of it is less brilliant than the morn-

ing star. How small our earth is in comparison of Jupiter ! There would not be less than fourteen hundred and seventy globes like ours, necessary to form one equal in size to that of Jupiter. Its distance from the sun is about four hundred and ninety millions of miles. *Saturn*, whose distance from the sun is upwards of nine hundred millions of miles, and magnitude one thousand times greater than the earth, was thought the remotest planet, until the late discovery of *Herschel*, whose distance is eighteen hundred millions of miles, and its magnitude ninety times greater than our earth.

In the mean time, the sun, with all the planets which accompany it, is but a very small part of the immense fabric of the universe. Each star which from hence appears to us no larger than a brilliant set in a ring, is in reality an immense body, which equals the sun both in size and splendor. Each star then is not only a world, but also the center, of a planetary system. It is in this light that we must consider the stars, which shine over our heads in a Winter night. They are distinguished from the planets by their brilliancy, and because they never change their place in the sky. According to their apparent size they are divided into six classes, which comprehend altogether about five thousand stars visible to the naked eye. Telescopes have opened to us new points in the

creation, since by their assistance millions of stars are discovered. But it would be a very senseless pride in man to try to fix the limits of the universe by those of his telescope.

If we reflect on the distance between the fixed stars and our earth, we shall have new cause to admire the greatness of the creation. Our senses alone make us already know that the stars must be farther from us than the planets. Their apparent littleness only proceeds from their distance from the earth, which distance cannot be measured. What then must the stars be? Their prodigious distance and their brightness tell us, they are suns which reflect as far as to us, not a borrowed light, but their own light; suns, which the Creator has sowed by millions in the immeasurable space; and each of which is accompanied by several terrestrial globes, which it is designed to illuminate. All the stars being so many suns, which can give light, animation, and heat to other globes, is it probable that God should have given them that faculty for no purpose? Would he have created stars, whose rays can pierce even to the earth, without having produced worlds also to enjoy their benign influence? God, who hath peopled this earth, which is a mere speck, with so many living creatures, would he have placed in the immense space so many desert globes? No certainly: Perhaps

each of these fixed stars, which we see by myriads, has its worlds moving round it, for which it has been created. Perhaps these spheres which we see above us, serve as abodes for different sorts of creatures ; and are peopled like our earth, with inhabitants who admire and praise the magnificence of the works of God. Perhaps from all these globes, as well as from ours, there rise continually towards the Creator prayer and hymns of praise and thanksgiving. It is true that these are only probable conjectures ; yet to every true lover of God these conjectures must be most agreeable and most delightful. How sublime is this thought, that, exclusive of the small number of rational creatures which inhabit this globe, there are infinite numbers of them in those worlds which appear from hence to be but mere luminous specks ! Beyond this world there is an immensity, in comparison of which our globe, large as it is, must be reckoned as nothing. Souls without number exist there. All of them magnify the name of our great Creator ; and all are as happy as their destination admits ; and perhaps aspire to a better world.

Let us stop here then, and reflect how great must be that Being who has created those immense globes ! who has regulated their course, and whose mighty hand directs and supports them !

And what is the clod of earth which we inhabit, with the magnificent scene which it presents us, in comparison with the beauty of the firmament ? If this earth were annihilated, its absence would be no more observed than that of a grain of sand from the sea shore. What are provinces and kingdoms in comparison of those worlds ? Nothing but atoms, which play in the air, and are seen in the sunbeams. And what am I, when I reckon myself among this infinite number of God's creatures ? How am I lost in my own nothingness ! But however little I appear in this, how great do I find myself in other respects ! " How beautiful this starry firmament, which God has chosen for his throne ! What is more admirable than the celestial bodies ! Their splendor dazzles me ; their beauty enchants me. However, all beautiful as it is, and richly adorned, yet is this sky void of intelligence. It knows not its own beauty ; whilst I, mere clay, which God has moulded with his hands, am endowed with sense and reason." I can contemplate the beauty of those shining orbs. Still more, I am already, to a certain degree, acquainted with their sublime Author ; and I partly see some rays of his glory. I will endeavor to be more and more acquainted with his works, and make it my employment, till by a glorious change I rise above the starry regions.

SENTIMENTS WHICH THE CONTEMPLATION OF
THE SKY EXCITES.

"The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue etherial sky,
Spangled with stars, a shining frame,
Their GREAT ORIGINAL proclaim."

ADDISON.

WHO but a spirit of unlimited intelligence and power, could have formed that superb vault over our heads? who could have given motion to those immense globes; that perpetual motion of inexpressible rapidity; a motion which even the smallest grain of sand could not have of itself? Whence proceeds that connection, that beauty, and harmony, which shine through every part of the whole? Who prescribed to those immense bodies, those laws which could not be discovered but by minds endowed with the greatest sagacity? Self existing, independent, and eternal Being! it is thee to whom the celestial bodies owe their existence, their laws, their arrangement, their power, and all the advantages which they procure to the earth.

What sublime ideas must rise in our souls, when we think of these great objects ! If the heavens and all their host have so much magnificence, beauty, and majesty, that the eye can never be satisfied with contemplating, nor the mind with admiring them, what must be *thy* beauty, THOU ETERNAL BEING, of whose splendor and glory these creatures are but faint and imperfect images ! What must be the incomprehensible extent of *thy* knowledge and understanding, since thou seest with one glance the whole immense space, all the numberless bodies in it, and art so intimately acquainted with the nature and properties of all the beings which thou hast placed there ? What depths of wisdom and knowledge must be in thee, O LORD ! who hast formed such admirable plans ! how great must thy power be, to be able to guide and direct, according to thy will, the most immense bodies ! to animate all by thy breath ! and to preserve all by thy almighty word !

THE BLUE COLOR OF THE SKY.

"How clear the cloudless sky ! how deeply ting'd
With a peculiar blue !"

THOMPSON.

TO judge merely by our senses we might imagine the sky over our heads to be a great vault painted blue, and the stars so many little brilliant nails stuck in it. The reason of it is that our atmosphere is not quite transparent. If we were raised very high above the surface of the earth, we should find that the air becomes more and more subtle, till we could no longer breathe in it ; and it would at last end in pure æther. The higher we climb on mountains the lighter the atmosphere grows, and the darker the bright azure of the sky appears. If we could rise as high as pure æther, this color would be entirely lost. The sky would seem to us as black as at night ; for all objects that do not transmit to us any rays of light appear so.* Consequently, if the air that surrounds us were as transparent as æther, the sky would not appear blue to us.

* We are informed by travellers, who have been on the high Alps, that the sky looked as black as jet.

The blue color of the sky is occasioned by the disposition of the atmosphere to reflect towards the earth the blue rays of light more copiously than the rays of other colors. However pale and slight the blue rays of light may be, there falls so great a quantity of them on our eyes, when we are in the open air, that the effect resulting from them is rather a dark blue.

These reflections may make some consider the sky differently from what they had done before. It may from hence be concluded that, even to the very color of the sky, there is no phenomenon in nature, in which we may not discover order, utility, and a wise purpose. As the color of green is the best that the Creator could have chosen for the ornament of the earth, so is the fine azure blue of the sky the most calculated to charm the eye. How dreadful is the appearance of the sky when covered with stormy clouds ! but what beauty, majesty, and simplicity in the color of it, when the weather is calm and serene ! The apartments of kings, decorated by the most skilful painters, are nothing when compared to the majestic simplicity of the celestial vault. When the eye has for any time contemplated the beauties of the earth, it is fatiated and tired ; but the more we contemplate the heavens the more charms we find in them.

OF THE SUN.

" Now Phœbus mounts triumphant in the skies,
The clouds disperse and gloomy horror flies :
Darkness gives place to the victorious light,
And all around is gay and fair and bright."

LANSDOWN:

OF all the parts of the system of the world the Sun is the most interesting to us. It is of a spherical figure, and is composed of a luminous substance which seems to be inexhaustible. By means of good telescopes spots have been discovered on its surface, which by their motion, show that it turns round its axis in about twenty-five days, ten hours. The sun is about ninety-five millions of miles distant from the earth, and about 1,400,000 times as great as the earth, the circumference of which is about 25,000 miles. It illuminates twenty-one opake globes called planets, which revolve round it at different distances, and in different periodic times : seven of these are called *primary*, and fourteen *secondary* planets. The nearest planet to the sun is *Mercury*, which is in a manner lost in its rays, and therefore is seldom seen, and is the least known of all the planets.

Venus is the next, which is called the morning star when it rises before, and the evening star when it sets after the sun. Next to *Venus* is the *Earth*, the surface of which consists of land and water, mountains and vallies : and the interior parts are composed of strata or beds of different substances. The earth is the abode of a multitude of creatures, both animate and inanimate ; and contains fossils, plants, &c. The moon revolves round the earth in a particular orbit, and accompanies it in its annual revolution round the sun. It is about one forty-ninth part of the magnitude of the earth. Some parts of the moon's disc appear bright, others dark and dull. Some of the bright parts are more brilliant than others, and, when viewed through a good telescope, appear to cast a shadow. The bright parts must therefore be higher than the dark parts ; and they resemble our mountains.* Some of the mountains are alone, others are contiguous, and sometimes form very long chains. The four last planets of the solar system are *Mars*, *Jupiter*, *Saturn*, and *Herschel*. *Jupiter* has four moons, or satellites ; *Saturn* seven, and *Herschel* two. *Jupiter* and *Saturn* are encompassed with a number of faintly luminous belts ; and *Saturn* with a broad, flat, luminous ring,

* Astronomers formerly supposed the bright parts of the moon to be land, and the dark parts water ; but this supposition is now exploded.

which has a striking appearance when seen through a telescope. Dark spots are visible on the planets, by the motion of which we know that they revolve round their axes. /

Mercury is 36,387,583 miles distant from the sun : performs its annual revolution in eighty-seven days, twenty-three hours, fifteen minutes, and forty-four seconds : and is 3,189 miles in diameter.

Venus is 67,993,362 miles distant from the sun : performs its annual revolution in two hundred and twenty-four days, sixteen hours, forty-nine minutes, eleven seconds ; a diurnal rotation in twenty-three hours and twenty minutes : and is 7609 miles in diameter.

The *Earth* is 94,000,474 miles distant from the sun : performs its annual revolution in three hundred and sixty-five days, six hours, nine minutes, twelve seconds ; its diurnal rotation in twenty-three hours, 56 minutes, four seconds ; and is in diameter 7928 miles.

Mars, is 143,227,582 miles distant from the sun : performs its annual revolution in six hundred eighty-six days, twenty-three hours, thirty

minutes, thirty-six seconds ; its diurnal rotation in twenty-four hours, forty minutes : and is in diameter 5195 miles.

Jupiter is 471,974,585 miles distant from the sun : performs its annual revolution in four hundred and thirty-three days, fourteen hours, twenty-seven minutes, eleven seconds ; its diurnal rotation in nine hours and fifty-six minutes : and is 92,414 miles in diameter.

Saturn is 896,705,301 miles distant from the sun : performs its annual revolution in ten thousand seven hundred and fifty-nine days, one hour, fifty-one minutes, eleven seconds ; its diurnal rotation in ten hours, and sixteen minutes : and is 78,236 miles in diameter

Herschel is 1,783,698,244 miles distant from the sun : performs his annual revolution in eighty-three years, one hundred and fifty days, and eighteen hours : and is 33,954 miles in diameter.

This vast domain of the sun which, without reckoning the comets,* extends to more than

* *Comets* are large opaque bodies which move in very elliptical orbits, and in all possible directions, having long, fiery, transparent tails. Their number is not known. Twenty-one have been seen ; and the periods of several have been determined.

1300 millions of miles, is however but a small part of the universe. For each of the fixed stars, the number of which is perhaps greater than the grains of sand on the sea shore, may be considered as a sun, equal or superior in magnitude, splendor, and influence to our own. It is ascertained that light employs about eight minutes in its passage from the sun to the earth. This is an astonishing velocity; it is moving through a space of ninety-five millions of miles in eight minutes, which is about a million of times swifter than a cannon ball when it is first projected from the mouth of the piece; a rapidity too great for the imagination to follow, or the mind to comprehend. And yet, surprising as such a motion appears, there may be stars whose light has not reached us since the creation of the world.

Notwithstanding the vast floods of light and heat which the sun has continued to send forth every moment from its first creation, it still remains undiminished, and as strong and diffusive as at the first day. Well might the Prophet cry out "*Great is the LORD who made it!*" What must HE be who dwelleth in light inaccessible and full of glory, whose works are so numerous, so splendid, and so august!

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OF THE MOON.

——— "The Moon's full eye
Opes through a cloud, and looks around the sky."

THE Moon, next to the sun, is, of all the celestial bodies, that which has the most salutary influence upon our globe ; and, if it were not in itself an object worth our attention, it would become so at least by the great advantages which we derive from it. Even with the naked eye we can discover several phenomena of the moon. It is a round opaque body, which borrows its light from the sun, and is apparent to every part of the earth in twenty-four hours (as the earth moves round its axis) and completes its own revolution in little less than twenty-eight days. But what the naked eye may observe in the moon is not to be compared to what we discover by the assistance of telescopes and calculations. How much are we obliged to those enlightened men, who, to extend our knowledge, and to render the glory of our Creator more and more manifest in the eyes of

mankind, have made inquiries and discoveries, which enable us to form the highest notions of the celestial bodies? By means of their laborious observations we now know that the moon, which appears to the naked eye so small, is, nevertheless, considerable, with relation to the earth. Its diameter is two thousand three hundred and twenty-six miles, its proportionable size as one is to forty-nine, and though the moon is nearer to us than any other planet, it is two hundred and forty thousand miles distant from this earth.

There are several spots in the moon visible to the naked eye. Some of these spots are pale and dark; others are more or less luminous, according to the light which they reflect. The bright spots are probably high mountains, which reflect the light of the sun from their tops; and the dark spots are probably vallies into which the shadows of the mountains fall. These discoveries, to which no solid objection can be made, prove that the moon is not so inconsiderable a body as ignorant people imagine. The size, the distance, and all that we know of it, gives us, on the contrary, a new proof of the unlimited power and wisdom of our Creator. But was a planet so large as the moon designed for no other purpose than to light

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our globe for some nights ? That body, which to all appearance resembles our earth, and seems proper for the same ends, was it created only to produce the flux and reflux of our seas, and for some advantages to our globe with which we are still unacquainted ? Is it probable that a surface of some millions of leagues should be without any living creatures ? Would the supreme Being have left that immense space an empty desert ? It would be inconsistent with the wisdom and goodness of God. Let us rather believe that God has established his empire in that planet, as well as amongst us. Without doubt there are innumerable creatures upon it, who adore with us the same Lord and Father, who are, like us, the objects of his providential care, and for whose happiness God provides with the same goodness as he does for ours. But as our knowledge in this respect is still very imperfect, let us confine ourselves to the advantages which accrue to us from the moon. The goodness of Providence towards man manifests itself very sensibly in this case. The moon is placed near us that it alone may shed more light upon our earth than all the fixed stars together. We derive from it, not only an agreeable object, but a thousand conveniencies and advantages. In what disorder and confusion should we be, in regard to the division and measure of time, were

it not for the regularity with which the changes of the moon succeed one another? The calculations of Astronomy, and the use of Almanacks, are owing to the observations made on the course of the moon.

Almighty God! I adore by the light of the moon, as by that of the sun, thy wisdom and goodness? The more I contemplate the heavens, which thou hast formed, the more I am filled with wonder and admiration!

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ECLIPSES OF THE SUN AND MOON.

————— “ shorn of his beams, the sun
In dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations—”

MILTON.

AN Eclipse of the sun is an effect entirely natural. It is caused by the moon's shadow falling upon the earth. But it can only take place when the moon, which is an opaque body, and dark in itself, comes nearly in a direct line between the sun and the earth. It then conceals from us part or the whole of that globe. The former is called a partial eclipse, the latter a total eclipse. Thus, the solar eclipse is nothing more than the situation of the earth when the moon's shadow falls upon it. We must not imagine that the sun is at that time really darkened : it is only concealed from us. It retains its usual splendor ; and all the difference is, that the rays which issue from it cannot reach us, because the moon is placed between the sun and our globe. This is the reason that a solar eclipse is never visible at the same time in all parts of our earth ; it is greater in one country than in another, and, in some places, it is not seen at all.

Not only the moon sometimes darkens our earth, but the latter also casts its shade upon the moon, and by these means intercepts the rays of the sun from it, either wholly, or in part, and this is called an eclipse of the moon: but it can only take place when the moon is at one side of the earth and the sun at the opposite side, and consequently when it is full moon. As that planet is really darkened by the shadow of the earth, the eclipse is perceived at the same time on all the points of an hemisphere of our globe. Some people may perhaps ask, of what use are the eclipses of the sun and moon? To those who do not calculate the utility of natural things merely from the immediate advantages which they derive from them, the eclipses are of important use. It is by their means that the true position and distance of towns and countries are known, and that we have been able to trace accurate maps of the remotest countries. Eclipses, if well observed, serve also to confirm chronology, and to direct the navigator, by shewing him how far he is from the east or west.

These advantages, however unimportant they may appear, are nevertheless, truly essential; and without them we should be deprived of a part of our happiness.

OF THE MILKY WAY.

"A broad and ample road, whose dust is gold
And pavement stars, as stars to thee appear,
Seen in the Galaxy, that milky way,
Which nightly, as a circling zone thou seest
Powdered with stars."

MILTON.

WHEN we examine the sky at night we perceive a pale and irregular light over our heads. A certain quantity of stars, the rays of which, by their confusion, form this light, this apparent cloud, or luminous tract; which is commonly called the galaxy or milky way. Those stars are too far from us to be perceived separately by the naked eye; and even between those which are visible through a glass there are spaces discoverable, which, to all appearance, are filled with an immense quantity of other stars, which even the telescope cannot make visible.

The stars which we see in the milky way appear to us no more than shining specks; although they are much larger than the globe of the earth. Whatever instrument we make use of, they still appear as small as before. If an inhabitant of our globe could travel in the air, and could

attain the height of 190 *millions* of miles, those luminous bodies would still appear only like shining specks. However incredible this may seem, it is not a chimerical idea, but is a fact which has actually been proved ; for about the twenty-first of December we are more than 190 millions of miles nearer the northern part of the sky than we shall be about the twenty-first of June ; and notwithstanding that difference we did not perceive any difference of size in those stars. This milky way, so inconsiderable in comparison of the whole space of the heavens, is sufficient to prove the greatness of the supreme Being ; and every star discovered in it teaches us the wisdom and goodness of God.

What are those stars in comparison of the immense quantity of globes and worlds which roll in the firmament ! A late ingenious astronomer, by help of a telescope of remarkable power, has discovered beyond conjecture this account of the milky way, and says, " That even our sun, and in consequence our whole solar system, forms but a part of the radiant circle. Many small specks in the heavens, unseen by mortal eye, he discovers to consist of myriads of stars ; being, as he supposes, entire systems of themselves." Here reason stops and is confounded : To admire and adore is all that remains for us to do.

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PLURALITY OF WORLDS.

"The stars, which grace the high expansion, bright
By their own beams and unprecious light,
Though some near neighbors seem, and some display
United lustre in the milky way,
At a vast distance from each other lie
Sever'd by spacious voids of liquid sky.
All these illustrious worlds, and many more
Which by the tube astronomers explore,
And millions which the glass can ne'er descry
Lost in the wilds of vast immensity,
Are suns, are centers, whose superior sway
Planets of various magnitude obey."

BLACKMORE.

IT is not through ignorance alone, but also through self love and pride, that we give the name of world only to one of the least parts of the universe ; persuading ourselves that our globe alone is inhabited ; that the sun was made merely to communicate to us its light and heat, and that the moon and stars have no other destination than that of lighting our nights, and shewing the traveller his way. The contemplation of the fixed stars is sufficient to contradict this ridiculous opinion. It is probable, that those celestial bodies, are not luminous specks, but great suns. If their destination were only to serve as nocturnal lights

to us, they would be of no use the greatest part of the year. The frequent cloudy skies, and the nights that are light from other causes, would make them useless. Those stars also, which the naked eye cannot discover, from their great distance, would be absolutely of no use; and the purpose ascribed to them would be better supplied by one single star nearer to us, than by so many millions at that distance. As the same reasoning may be applied to every use which the stars are of to us, either in navigation or any thing else, it must be allowed, that we could not possibly account for the design of those numerous suns, if no creatures except those of our own globe profited by their light and heat, or unless they themselves served as habitations for different beings. This conclusion will appear still more natural, if we reflect attentively on our solar system. We have already observed that the moon in some things resembles this earth. That there, as well as here, mountains and vallies are to be seen. Such affinities as these authorize us to admit others, and to suppose also in the moon, rivers, seas, minerals, plants, animals, and rational creatures. The analogy between the moon and the rest of the planets leads us to form the same conjectures of them. And as each star has, to all appearance, like our sun, its particular planets; and as these undoubtedly resemble ours, we in a manner, be-

hold round us an innumerable multitude of worlds, each of which has its peculiar laws, arrangement, productions, and inhabitants. How numerous are the works of God ! How glorious the starry sky ! How great our Creator ! Millions of worlds declare his glory, and the intelligent beings which they contain acknowledge and adore their Maker. How forcibly does this incline us to join with the heavenly choir in singing his praise, that it may resound over all the universe ! How happy the prospect that opens to us of that future state, wherein we shall be acquainted with these worlds, and able to comprehend the wonders of them ! How great will be our astonishment in discovering objects quite new to us, or at least very imperfectly known ! In what splendor will the divine perfections appear, the power of which extends over a multitude of worlds, while some falsely imagine it reaches only to the little globe which we inhabit ! What endless subjects for gloryfying the Creator and Ruler of all these worlds !

DISCOVERIES MADE BY THE MICROSCOPE.

———“close to the eye
 Apply the sight invigorating lens
 And mark the sportful living myriads,
 Else unobserv'd in viewless littleness.”

“Even the blue down the purple plum surrounds,
 A living world, thy failing sight confounds,
 ———a peopled habitation shows,
 Where millions taste the bounty God bestows.”

BOYSE.

NATURE is in small objects what she is in great ones. There is no less order and harmony in the construction of the mite than in that of the elephant. The only difference is that the weakness of our sight prevents us from penetrating into the nature and organization of small bodies, which often escape our eyes, and which we can perceive only by the assistance of glasses. Microscopes have made us acquainted with a new world of vegetables and animals. They teach us that objects which the naked eye cannot discover, have extent, parts, and form. Let us mention some examples of it, to lead us to praise God, whose glory manifests itself so wonderfully in small objects. Every

grain of sand appears round when we examine it with our eyes only, but by the assistance of a glass we may observe that every grain is different both in size and shape. Some are perfectly round, others square, others conical, but mostly irregular. And what is still more astonishing is, that by means of a microscope, which makes objects appear many times larger than they are, we may discover, in the grains of sand, a new animal world : For it has been found, that their cavities contain insects. In cheese, there are little worms called mites, which to the naked eye appear mere dots, whilst, with a microscope, they are proved to be insects of a singular figure. They have not only eyes, mouth, and feet, but a transparent body furnished with long hair in the form of prickles.

As for the vegetable kingdom it is found in the mouldy substance which usually sticks to damp bodies. It presents a thick forest of trees and plants, where the branches, leaves, flowers, and fruit can be clearly distinguished. The flowers have long, white, transparent stalks. The bud, before it opens, is but a little green ball ; and it does not become white till it has blown. You would as little expect to find these objects in mouldy substances, as that the meal which covers the wings of the butterfly should be a bunch of little feathers ; if the truth of it had not been

proved by the microscope. But we have no occasion to carry our researches to remote objects. Let us limit them to what relates to ourselves. Examine with a microscope the surface of your skin, and you will find that it resembles the scaly skin of a fish. It has been computed that a grain of sand could cover 250 of these scales, and that one only of these scales covers 500 pores, and consequently that a space equal to a grain of sand contains 125000 pores.

Thus we see how great our Creator is, even in things which prejudice makes us consider as trifles; what an immense number of creatures he has spread over the earth! How many objects in nature are concealed from us! We already know above thirty thousand plants, and of insects a vast number of species. But what is that in comparison of the whole? If the bottom of the sea, and of rivers, could be open to our sight; if we could transport ourselves to other planets; how would our astonishment increase at the immense number of God's creatures! How wonderfully we experience that he has displayed as much wisdom in the most minute objects as in the greatest! Even the smallest bodies are as complete and regular, as those prodigious ones, whose circumference is calculated by millions. The Crea-

tor provides with the same goodness for the wants of the insect which crawls in the dust, as for those of the whale which appears like an island in the midst of the waves. Let us imitate in this the example of the Deity. Let the least of creatures feel our benevolence, since our common Author vouchsafes to preserve their existence.



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PART II.

*ON THE SEASONS OF THE YEAR.**MEDITATION ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE YEAR.*

— " See the new born year, all gaily drest
In radiant robes of novelty and hope,
Has seiz'd, with aspect bland, the car of time."

I REPRESENT to myself this first day of the year as if it were the first day of my life ; and, from the goodness of God, I presume to hope for blessings this year equal to those that have been granted me on former ones. What may I not hope for from my heavenly Father, who from the first moment of my existence provided for me with so much tenderness and goodness ? In my parents he gave me friends, who, from my very birth, supported, and brought me up, and whose disinterested affection protected me in the weak and helpless state of infancy. Without such care how could I have been preserved to enjoy the many blessings which I now possess ?

I enter with the present day into a new period of life, not so much unprovided for, nor so helpless, as when I first came into the world ; but with equal occasion for assistance in many respects as I then experienced. I require friends to shed sweets upon my life, to support my spirits when oppressed with grief, and to warn me of dangers into which I might otherwise fall. And will not my heavenly Father grant me this best of blessings ?

With this first day of the year my lot is as it were settled over again. The Lord, who gave me being, takes in at one glance (which nothing can deceive) each week, each day, each instant of this year. All indeed that relates to me is hidden from *me* ; but all things are visible to God, and all are settled according to his decrees, which are full of wisdom and goodness. If in the course of the year I experience any misfortune, which I could not foresee ; if any unforeseen happiness fall to my lot ; if I have any loss to bear, which I could not expect ; all will work together for my good.

Full of this conviction I begin the new year. Let what will happen I shall be more and more confirmed in the persuasion that God will be my Preserver still, as he has all along been. If I find myself exposed to poverty and distress, I will re-

member the days of my infancy, that more critical state, in which he protected me. If I meet with ingratitude from a friend, even *that* ought not to make me unhappy. God can raise me up other friends, in whose tenderness I may enjoy delight and comfort. If days full of dangers, and persecution be my lot, even these ought not to terrify me. I should put my trust in that power which protected my childhood, when it was exposed to a thousand dangers. What then can prevent my beginning this year with a tranquil mind? I look forward without anxiety, and leave my fate to the guidance of Providence.

EQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE SEASONS.

" There is, who deems all climes, all seasons fair;
There is, who knows no restless passion's strife;
Contentment, smiling at each idle care;
Contentment, thankful for the gift of life!"

SCOTT of AMWELL.

WHILE the sun is far from us, and the severe cold binds and shuts up our earth, there are some countries where the inhabitants enjoy all the beauties of Spring; others, where they are gathering rich harvests; and others, where Autumn fills their granaries with fruit. Thus has the divine wisdom regulated the change of seasons, and distributed the same favors to all his creatures at different times. His impartial love extends to every being which he has made. It is sufficient that they are in want of his blessings; he takes pleasure in granting them. His beneficent views extend over the deserts of Arabia with as much goodness as over the smiling countries of Europe; and his government is the same from pole to pole. But, since God distribute the blessings of this life with an equal hand, why are some countries deprived of the pleasures of Spring, while others enjoy them in such abundance? Why are the

rays of the sun so partially spread that in some climates there is darkness, and in others light, for whole months together? Why are not the frozen countries near the pole as beautiful and fertile as our plains and valleys? What art thou, O man, who darest to ask such questions? What right hast thou to demand an account of the infinitely wise Being of the manner in which he rules the world? Vain mortal, learn to be humble, and to acknowledge traces of a sovereign wisdom in the very things wherein thy weak understanding imagines there are defects. God has given to each country what was necessary to the life, support, and content of his creatures. All is planned according to the climate which they inhabit; and Providence has, every where, wisely provided for their preservation and support.

Lord! The earth is full of thy mercies. Thy goodness is spread over all the heavens, and extends to the very clouds. What country is there that has not experienced the effects of thy goodness! What province, throughout thy immense empire, is there, in which the traces of thy beneficence may not be seen! Great and admirable are the order and beauty of the visible creation!—O Lord how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all!

CHANGES OF THE SEASONS.

"View how in course the constant Seasons rise,
Deform the earth or beautify the skies :
First, Spring advancing, with her flowery train ;
Next, Summer's hand that spreads the sylvan scene ;
Then Autumn, with her yellow harvests crown'd ;
And trembling Winter, close the annual round."

BOYSE.

IN the warmest climates, as well as in the coldest there are but two seasons in the year really different. In the coldest Summer lasts about four months ; and the Winter about eight. Spring and Autumn are scarcely perceptible there ; because in a few days heat succeeds cold ; and, on the contrary, heat is soon followed by severe cold. The hottest countries have a dry and burning season for seven or eight months. Afterwards comes rain, which lasts four or five months ; and this rainy season makes the difference between Summer and Winter. It is only in temperate climates that there are four seasons in the year really distinct. The Summer heats gradually decrease, so that the autumnal fruits have time to ripen by

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degrees, without being hurt by the cold of Winter. In the same manner in Spring the plants have time to shoot, and grow insensibly, without being destroyed by late frosts, or too much hastened by early heats. In Europe these four seasons are most perceptible; and particularly in Italy, and in the south of France. By degrees, as we advance towards the north, or towards the south, the Spring and Autumn are less marked. From the middle of May to the end of June it rains less frequently; after which the violent rains return, and continue to the end of July. In February and April the weather is very uncertain. If the melted snow and rains remained on the ground, the water would annually rise to the height of a foot and three quarters in most countries.

This change of seasons deserves our admiration. It cannot be attributed to chance; for in fortuitous events there can be neither order nor constancy. Now in every country throughout the world the seasons succeed each other with the same regularity as the nights and days, and change the appearance of the earth precisely at the appointed time. We see it successively adorned, sometimes with herbs and leaves, sometimes with flowers, sometimes with fruit. Afterwards it is stripped of all its orna-

ments, till Spring returns, and in some degree re-
vives it. Spring, Summer, and Autumn provide
food for men and animals, in giving them abun-
dant of fruits ; and though nature appears dead
in Winter, yet that season is not without its bless-
ings ; for it moistens and fertilizes the earth, and
by that preparation makes it fit to produce its
plants and fruits in due season.



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*COMPLAINTS OF MANKIND, RELATIVE TO CERTAIN
INCONVENIENCES IN THE LAWS OF NATURE.*

"To former scenes our fancy oft returns,
To former scenes that little pleas'd when here !
Our Winter chills us, and our Summer burns ;
Yet we dislike the changes of the Year."

SCOTT, of AMWELL.

"**W**H**Y** is the human body, from its constitution, liable to so many infirmities and accidents ?" Let him that asks this question, say, whether it be possible to imagine a body which unites more advantages than that which he has received from his Creator ? If one of our fellow creatures be deformed, another lame, a third deaf or dumb ; is it a reason for us to murmur against God ? Are those defects so common that they should induce us to complain ? It is of use to men, in general, that they may not want examples of the defects to which the human body is liable. For, when a person, perfect and well made, compares himself with one that is crooked and deformed, he is sensible of all the advantages of well-formed limbs ; he learns to set a proper value upon a gift on which he had hardly ever reflected till then, and to take

more care of its preservation. How valuable is each eye, each ear, each organ of sense, each joint, each limb, if we only observe the condition of the few people who are deprived of them ! Would any of us part with a limb in exchange for the greatest treasure ? Are not our bodies more beautiful and regular than the finest building, or the most curious machine ? And though the latter are very inferior to it, we are far from attributing the assemblage of their parts to chance. " Why are some countries of the earth so different from others ; sometimes cold, sometimes damp, sometimes low, and sometimes high ?" But, O man, it is owing to this difference that the countries of the earth produce that variety of exhalations and winds, which occasion that mixed air, wherein experience tells us, that men and animals live healthy and content in most places, and wherein plants also grow and increase. " It is, however allowed that the variations of the weather are not beneficial to all men, and to all countries." But, has not the preceding weather influenced the following, as the climate of one country often influences another. Are we capable of judging of the whole ? Must a million of farmers sigh in vain for rain, because dry weather would suit the private convenience of one family ? A certain temperature of the air may occasion, here and there, a transient barren-

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ness ; but, can it be called an evil, if it were necessary in order to hinder the air from corrupting ? Ought the east wind, favorable to a whole country, to cease to blow, because its violence may cause some shipwrecks, or be hurtful to some consumptive people ? Is it reasonable, when we cannot take in the whole, to find fault with part ? “ Why are there so many hurtful animals ? ” Would it then be better to have no beasts of prey, small or large, upon the earth ? They put a stop to the number of animals, that would otherwise overpower us ! and, it is because some animals serve for food to beasts of prey, that the numbers of living creatures increase every year. “ Why has the Creator regulated the course of nature by such invariable laws ? It is in consequence of this regulation that man’s experience and labor enable him to make use of his understanding and powers, so as to be, in some measure, master of his own welfare. Would we wish to inhabit a world, where we should have no occasion to do any thing ; where we could not in any way contribute to the multiplication of our own pleasures ; where there should be no rule, no fundamental law ; where, in short, the best, the bad, and the worst being equally unknown, nothing could make us attend to the laws of nature ?

Doubtless, there will ever be a number of things in nature, the purposes of which, or their relation with the whole, must ever be concealed from us. But, on all occasions, let us rest on this principle, that God does every thing for wise and beneficent purposes. And, when these enigmas, these inexplicable things, present themselves, let us say with the apostle, "O! the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

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SPRING.

HOPE OF SPRING.

"Stern Winter hence with all his train removes,
And cheerful skies and limpid streams are seen;
Thick sprouting foliage decorates the groves;
Reviving herbage clothes the fields with green.

Yet lovelier scenes the approaching months prepare;
Kind Spring's full bounty soon will be display'd;
The smile of beauty every vale shall wear,
The voice of song enliven every shade."

SCOTT, OF ANWELL.

EVERY day brings us nearer to the pleasures of Spring, and gives us hope of the time approaching, in which we may breathe more freely, and contemplate nature with more satisfaction and joy. This sweet expectation is almost the only one which does not deceive us, being founded on the invariable laws of nature. The charms of this hope are felt in every heart without distinction; for the beggar, as well as the monarch, may behold the Spring approach with pure joy, and promise himself in it the enjoyment of pleasures. This hope is not attended with impatience, because it extends very far, and takes in a multitude of objects.

The coming of Spring procures us a thousand new pleasures. The beauty and perfume of the flowers; the singing of the birds; and every where the cheerful prospect of mirth and pleasure. Most earthly hopes are attended with anxieties: But that of Spring is as satisfactory as it is innocent and pure; for nature seldom deceives us. On the contrary, her presents generally surpass our expectations, in number, magnificence and quantity. Encouraged by the hope of Spring, we have patiently borne the inconvenience of cold and bad weather; many are now on the point of seeing that hope abundantly realized. A few more disagreeable days and the sky will become serene, the air milder; the sun will revive nature, and the earth will reassume its ornaments.

O most merciful God! I return thee thanks for those sources of joy and comfort which thou hast opened to us, to soften the ills of life. I bless thee for every ray of hope which has animated my soul, for every blessing already received, and for all those reserved for me hereafter.

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REFLECTIONS ON THE SPRING.

" Lo SPRING returns on mildest breezes borne !
Nature revives : the fields no longer mourn.
A verdant carpet o'er the plain she spreads,
And fragrant sweets rise where e'er she treads.
The feather'd songsters warble through the grove,
And give the genial season all to love."

THAT Season of the Year, which we call the *Spring*, has charms which are felt in every heart ; all mankind behold its approach with joy, and promise themselves much pleasure from it. Encouraged by the hope of Spring, we have patiently borne the severities of Winter, and now see that hope most pleasingly realized. It was but lately that the whole surface of the earth was barren and desolate. The vallies, the prospect of which now gives us so much pleasure, were buried in snow ; the rivers and streams, which now pleasingly murmur as they flow, were stopped in their courses ; the trees discovered nothing but leafless branches ; the birds, who now fill the air with their music, were mute ; and, as far as the eye could stretch, all was melancholy silence. But, in this beautiful season, nature awakes and all her vital energies revive. The mighty pulse of life

then begins again to beat ; the earth, penetrated by the quickening warmth of the sun, re-assumes her ornaments ; the sky becomes serene, and the air more mild ; the whole face of nature is renewed and embellished, and whenever we turn our eye, it is captivated and sweetly delayed. The seasons, as they change, bring with them an agreeable variety, and each of them is distinguished by peculiar pleasures ; but, of all others, this, the youth of the just ripening year, most universally delights us : all is beauty to the eye, music to the ear, and transport to the heart.

That we may be the more strongly impressed with a reverential admiration of that God whose power and goodness are so pleasingly manifested at this season, let us consider some of the various beauties and blessings of the Spring.

He who has any taste for the beauties of nature can never want pure and sincere pleasures in this season. The clear unclouded sky is his canopy, and the earth, enamelled with flowers, is his carpet ; the cattle express, in the best manner they can, the spirit and the joy with which they are animated ; the fish, recovering their former vivacity, rise to the surface of the water, and agreeably amuse our sight ; whilst the air resounds with the songs of birds, whose concerts are hymns of

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joy to their Creator, expressive of their happiness and love. Such is the general bliss which the *Spring* produces ; and we every where trace its enlivening powers and happy effects in an universal serenity, liveliness and joy.

Is it possible that, at the sight and enjoyment of such objects, the heart should not beat high with grateful transport ? Or can the mind have a more pleasing employment than that of contemplating and praising the greatness of the Creator's wisdom, and the beauty of his works ? Never ought we to breathe the refreshing air of this season, without being awed into reverence, and warmed with devotion ; without recollecting that it is God who clothes the woods and meadows with their beautiful verdure ; gives life and happiness to the various tribes of creatures who mingle so much magnificence and beauty with the scenery ; and that it is through Him we enjoy the sweets and the comforts of returning Spring.

There is not a field which does not now present a beautiful landscape to the eye. We see on all sides a multitude of flowers in the bud ; their sweets, as it were, locked up, and their charms concealed ; but the all-enlivening heat of the sun will soon open them, cause them to bloom and blossom, and equally delight and surprise us with

the variety of their beauties : for how much soever we may admire the prodigious *number* of flowers, their *variety* is, perhaps, more astonishing. Certainly nothing but a Divine Power could cause such numbers to grow ; and this power must be equalled by wisdom to produce such endless variety. Each has something peculiar to itself ; and it is an act of divine goodness thus to have varied them, and added that charm to their other perfections. If they had all been perfectly alike, the sameness would have disgusted us ; and, if Summer produced no flowers but such as the Spring affords, we should soon be tired of cultivating them. With what wisdom has the Creator planned his works ! all wonderfully various, all completely perfect ! in all the agreeable and the useful are united.

We may also find many reasons to admire the wisdom and goodness of the Creator in the *succession* of flowers. These beautiful children of nature appear not all at once, but in a regular succession ; the time is fixed in which one is to unfold its leaves, another to blossom, and a third to fade. Each month displays ornaments peculiar to itself. And it is for very kind purposes that, on the return of Spring, each plant and flower should open its leaves, and blossom at the time, and in the order, appointed : The Creator thus favors

us with a regular train of benefits, and not only multiplies, but renders them perpetual; for, although there are always some flowers fading, there are new ones continually springing up, to adorn the face of the earth, and enliven our journey through life.

Let it also be remembered that, to the pleasure which we receive from the wonderful variety, and regular succession of flowers, God has also been pleased graciously to add the charm of sweet perfume, and to give as much variety to their smell as to their forms; and though we cannot exactly tell in what the difference consists, yet we perceive it very sensibly, in going from flower to flower: and it is remarkable that this smell is not so strong as to affect the head disagreeably, or so weak as to lose its pleasing effect. Thus all the sensations that flowers can give contribute to our happiness; they all combine to fill our mind with the purest delights, and to lead our hearts to God: And, if there were no other proofs on earth of the power and wisdom of the Creator, the flowers of the Spring alone would be sufficient.

The leaves of trees and plants also, common as they are, and of how little value soever they may seem, form, at this season, one of the beauties of nature; our impatience to see them, and our joy

when they appear, prove sufficiently that they are a great ornament to our gardens, fields and woods. This, however, is the least of the advantages which arise from leaves.

The nourishment of plants and trees proceeds, in a great measure, from their leaves, which imbibe moisture, and receive those refreshing dews, that falling upon the upper leaves, water those beneath them, and thus none of the nourishing juice is lost. Leaves also contribute to the preservation of those buds of trees which are to shoot in the following year, for the eye of the bud is already under the leaf, and is guarded and preserved by it; as we see many trees wither and die, when their leaves are gathered. This should teach us that the least of God's works has been planned with wisdom; that there is not a single leaf which is a mere ornament, but that they all contribute to the fruitfulness of the earth, and the support of its inhabitants.

In the blossoms of trees we may also observe an infinite variety; all are beautiful, but their beauties are all different. This difference, however, does not, in any degree, affect either their value, or their usefulness: and hence we should learn a lesson of contentment. If we have not the advantages which others possess; if we are

not as rich, or as beautiful, we should neither be disturbed nor discouraged; we may be still as virtuous and as happy.

And when we reflect that all these dazzling beauties, which we admire in the blossoms of trees, will very soon disappear, we should be careful so to live as that, when the bloom of health, and other outward advantages are no more, we may supply their places with the fair fruits of virtue and piety: remembering that a blighted Spring makes a barren year; and that, however beautiful and gay its flowers may be, they are only intended by nature to prepare the fruits of Autumn.

Another pleasure attending the return of Spring is that "the time of the singing of birds is come:" the soft air of the Spring awakens the winged songsters, the variety of whose music charms the ear, and fills the soul with a sweet and a serene pleasure. These splendid inhabitants of the air possess all those qualities that can soothe the heart, and please the fancy; the brightest colors; the roundest forms; the most lively manners; and the sweetest music: They enliven our walks; and, throughout all the retreats of retirement, fill our hearts with gaiety, and give harmony to meditation.

Another advantage arising from the Spring is, that it furnishes us with an opportunity of observing the industry and labors of the *bees*. Bees have been the theme of the poet, the legislator, and philosopher; they have been considered as emblems both of public and private virtue; of subordination, ingenuity, and of a diligence which is not only uncommon, but, perhaps, unequalled. They appear as soon as Winter is past, and, even before the juices of those flowers which begin to blossom have been sufficiently ripened to furnish honey, gather some little food; but their cares and activity increase, as the season advances; they do all they can, and despise not small gains, if they can increase their stores a little. They prudently lay up provision for the winter, knowing that they can gather no more when the season of flowers is past; and having then no resources for subsistence but such as they have already collected.

But it is not sufficient that we admire the activity of these little creatures; it ought to inspire us with emulation, and serve us as a model. There are, indeed, no insects around us which can afford us more pleasing, or more useful, lessons. Insignificant as they may seem, we may learn from them virtues on which the happiness of our lives greatly depends. A hive is a school to which many of the human race ought to be sent. All

the virtues are conspicuous in the bees: they are never idle, and all labor for the public good; they live in union and harmony; are strictly united and perfectly happy; they enrich themselves without robbing others; and are all obedient and submissive to the laws of the community. If we compare human societies with this, we must blush and be ashamed; particularly if we recollect that we have much stronger reasons for the performance of our duties than these insects; as the fruit of our labors extends not to days and years only but to eternity.

This season of the year seems peculiarly formed for piety. That cheerfulness of heart which springs up in us from a survey of the beauties of nature is an admirable preparation for gratitude; and it seems reasonable to suppose that each field should be to us a temple, where we should offer up to our Creator praise and thanksgiving; where each thought and each action should tend to his glory, and thus convert a common walk into a morning or an evening sacrifice. But we daily see the ingratitude of man to his heavenly Benefactor. Yet how is it possible for us, at this season, to forget our Creator, who shews himself to us in each blade of grass and each flower of the field; who addresses himself, in the mild and persuasive language of renovated nature, to our senses,

our reason, and all our faculties? Let us listen to her language and we shall never be insensible or ungrateful. When we find ourselves pleased with the beauties of the creation, let us consider to whom we are indebted for all this entertainment; who it is that openeth his hand and filleth the world with good. We shall never truly enjoy this season, 'till, by fixing our attention on the works of the Creator, we learn to trace out his power and goodness; and to be careful not to make a bad use of the blessings of Spring, by indulging pleasures which lead to folly and sin.

Yet Spring, though the season of hope, supplies us also with images of frailty and death, which are connected with almost every beauty of nature. Spring is the season in which plants receive a new life; and in which most of them perish. We see the trees full of blossoms, and abounding with beauties; but all these shewy ornaments will die in the same season which gave them birth. Let every one, in these blossoms, behold an image of himself; and recollect that of those days of youth, which we call the Spring season of life, nothing but a melancholy remembrance remains, unless he has made a good use of them.

But, although these thoughts ought to make us serious, we should notwithstanding enjoy both

the Spring of nature and the pleasures of life, as they are bestowed upon us by our gracious Creator ; mixing, at the same time, with these enjoyments such reflections as arise from the nature of Spring and of Life. The thought of death is very consistent with every innocent pleasure ; far from causing melancholy, it should teach us to rejoice in the Lord ; should guard us against a bad use of earthly pleasures, and inspire us with a desire of uninterrupted and everlasting happiness.

Lastly, let us recollect that, as the flowers which we so much admire in the Spring were once coarse and ungraceful roots ; but, in their appointed time, bloom, delight our senses, and adorn the earth with an infinite variety of charms ; this affords us a beautiful representation of the state of our re-animated bodies ; which, although, whilst in the grave, an object of horror, will experience, at the resurrection a most astonishing change ; that which “ was sown in dishonor shall be raised in glory ;” “ the corruptible will put on incorruption ; the mortal be clothed with immortality ;” and shine as the brightness of the firmament in the new Heavens and the new Earth, where an unfading Spring flourishes, and will continue to flourish through the ages of eternity.

USE OF VEGETABLES.

" Your contemplation farther yet pursue;
The wondrous world of vegetables view.
Here various trees their various fruits produce,
Some for delightful taste, and some for use:
There sprouting plants enrich the plain and wood,
For physic some, and some designed for food:
While fragrant flowers with different colors dy'd
On smiling meads unfold their gaudy pride."

BLACKMORE.

WHEN I consider the great number and variety of vegetables, I discover in this circumstance, as in every thing else, the beneficent views of my Creator. What indeed could he propose by covering the earth with so many different herbs, plants, and fruits, but the advantage and happiness of his creatures? Do not *plants* and *fruit* furnish us every day with the most wholesome nourishing food? Do we not mostly owe our cloths, houses, and furniture, to the vegetable world? There is no part of plants but has its utility. The *roots* furnish medicaments: They

serve for food and fuel ; to make pitch, dyes, and all sorts of utensils. Of *wood* is made charcoal, buildings, fires, medicines, paper, dyes, and a vast number of instruments. Even the *bark* has its utility in medicine, in tanning, &c. The *ashes* serve to manure and improve the lands, to bleach cloth, to make saltpetre, potash, &c. *Rosin* is useful to painters. Pitch and tar are made of it. *Turpentine* is used in medicine ; hard rosin to varnish, to solder, and to rub the bow-strings of musical instruments, in order to make them more sonorous. *Flowers* please and delight both by their color and smell. They are useful in medicine, and especially in furnishing bees with wax and honey. The *fruits*, which ripen by degrees, serve for our food, and are eaten either raw, baked, dried, or preserved. But vegetables are not for the use of man alone. They are of still greater use to animals, most of which have no other food. The reason that there are so many fields, and so great a variety of herbs and plants, is that all the different animals may find their proper food.

O heavenly Father ! Who can reckon all the blessings which the vegetable world affords ? At least it is manifest that all the arrangements

which thou hast made, in this respect, tend to the utility of all thy creatures. Thou hast provided for the wants of every individual. Thou hast assigned to each the plant properest for its food and preservation. There is not a plant upon earth that has not its purpose and use. What sentiments, therefore, of gratitude and veneration ought we not to feel for thy beneficence?



ON THE BLOSSOMS OF TREES.

Observe the trees their tender buds disclose,
How with young bloom the early orchard glows;
There ripening fruits in embryo small appear,
The grateful prospect of a plenteous year.

AT the time when our gardens and fields are adorned with all the ornaments of Spring, all the region appears with equal pomp, and every where presents the most cheerful prospect. The power of the first word pronounced by the Creator when he formed the world, produced all these magnificent effects. The Creator and Ruler of the world, has in a few days renewed, and in a manner created the earth again, for the use and pleasure of his intelligent creatures. Come, O man! come and try what thy wisdom and power can do. Art thou able to make a single tree blossom, to call from the earth the smallest blade of grass, to order a single tulip to appear in all its beauty? Draw near, ye learned artists, and skilful painters, and contemplate these flowers, examine these master-pieces with the most scrupulous attention! Is any thing wanting to their perfec-

tion ? Do you find any fault in the mixing of the colors, in their form, or proportion ? Could your pencil express the dazzling red of the peach bloom ? Could you imitate the fine enamel, the uniformity and simplicity with which a cherry tree in blossom is adorned ? But why do I say, imitate ? Are you even capable of feeling all the magnificence of renewed nature, or of forming a just idea of its inimitable art ? If there were no stronger proofs on earth of the power and wisdom of God, the flowers of spring alone would be sufficient to convince us of it. His power evidently appears throughout the whole. Each tree, herb, and flower proclaims his goodness and wisdom, which are over all the earth,

We remark an infinite variety in the blossoms of trees. All are beautiful ; but their beauties are different. One surpasses another ; but there is none which has not something pleasing peculiar to itself. However great the Creator is in dispensing his gifts, he still reserves to himself the liberty of bestowing more on some than others. But this difference is only in respect to accessory qualities. Such a tree, for example, has blossoms of a dazzling white ; another has red stripes and shades, which the first wants : some have, (added to the beauty of their form and color) an exqui-

site perfusion. But all these differences are only accidental, and do not in the least affect their fertility. Thus, when God does not give us the same advantages as appear in some of our fellow creatures, it ought not to afflict or disturb us; for the loss of any accidental beauty, of whatever nature it may be, does not hurt our real welfare. Let our chief study be, to act in such a manner, that when the beauty and charms of the body are no more, we may supply their place with abundant fruits of virtue and piety.

REFLECTIONS ON A FLOWER GARDEN.

————— "arrayed
In all the colors of the flushing year;
The garden glows, and fills the liberal air
With lavish fragrance."

THOMPSON.

COME and behold the flower-garden, and reflect on the number of different beauties assembled together in this little space. The art and industry of man have made it a charming scene of the finest flowers. But what would it have been without care and culture? A wild desert, full of thistles and thorns. Such would youth be, if they were neglected to be formed or properly educated. But when young people early receive useful instructions, and are under wise direction, they are like lovely blossoms, which delight with their beauty, and will soon produce fruit beneficial to society.

Behold the night violet, or the Julian flower, which, towards evening scents our gardens with its perfume, in which it is superior to all others.

It is little and of a grey color, tinged with green, so that it can scarcely be distinguished from the leaves. Modest, without shew or pretensions, it perfumes the whole garden ; although it is not observed in the multitude ; and it is difficult to believe that a flower, so insignificant in appearance, can shed so sweet and pleasing a perfume. It is like a person who has much genius, and whom nature has compensated for the want of beauty by more solid endowments. The righteous man often does good in secret and in obscurity, and sheds around him the perfume of good works ; and, when we wish to be acquainted with this beneficent man, we find that there is nothing of distinction either in his person, condition, or rank. In the carnation beauty and perfume are both united, and it is undoubtedly the most perfect of all flowers. It almost equals the tulip in its colors, and it surpasses it in the multitude of its leaves and the elegance of its form. A little bed of carnations perfumes a whole garden. This flower is the emblem of a person who possesses both wisdom and beauty, and knows how to conciliate the love and respect of his fellow-creatures. Let us now observe the rose, its color, form, perfume, every thing in this flower charms us. But it appears to be the most transient and frail of any, and soon loses the beauty that distinguished

it from so many flowers. This is an useful lesson for those who shine only in beauty, and it ought to teach them not to be vain of their charms.

In general, it is a melancholy sight to see, in this fine season, the ground already strewed with so many faded and dead flowers. We ought not, however, to complain that Providence does not give more stability to them. The world is a great stage, where we are not to see always the same actors. It is right that those who have finished their parts should retire, and make room for others. This is what the variety of God's works requires ; a variety which constitutes part of their perfection. We are also sensible to the charms of novelty ; it is therefore necessary that the first objects should disappear. If flowers preserved their blossoms the whole year, they would not please us as much as they do by only lasting a few months. Their absence makes us wish for their return. If they were continually before us we should soon be fatiated. When we have seen an object in all its different points of view, we have in some measure exhausted its beauty, we become indifferent to it, and we aspire after new pleasures. The variation and continual succession of earthly blessings are therefore a mean which Providence makes use of to render our lives constantly agreeable.

Such is worldly happiness. All is vanity.—
“All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man
as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and
the flower thereof falleth away.” The lilies and
roses in a beautiful face fade as well as the flow-
ers of the garden, and death leaves no traces of
them. Let us then be wise enough to seek our
peace and happiness in constant and durable bless-
ings. Wisdom and virtue never fade. They
are inexhaustible sources of endless joy.

THE BEAUTY AND UTILITY OF THE MEADOWS
AND FIELDS.

" As o'er the varied meads I stray
Or trace through winding vales my way,
While opening flowers their sweets exhale
And odors breathe in every gale,
My soul responsive hails the scene,
Attun'd to joy and peace within.
But, musing on the liberal hand
That scatters blessings o'er the land,
That gives for man with power divine
The earth to teem, the sun to shine,
My grateful heart with rapture burns
And pleasure to devotion turns."

WHATEVER charms the flowers cultivated in our gardens may have, those in the fields and meadows are still more agreeable. There is beauty in the former, but in the latter beauty and utility are united. Mere useless beauty pleases for a moment only. Is it not true that, in those long gravel walks, so even and neat, those arbors and summer houses, those parterres with pretty borders, those walls, those inclosures; is it not true that we feel confined, and as it were oppress'd in them? All those places, where the view is confined, seem to set bounds to our liberty. We

wish to fly away to the fields and meadows. We seem, in some degree, to be more independent, and more at ease, in proportion as our walk enlarges and lengthens before us. In the country, in Summer, nature, fruitful and beautiful, every moment varies its appearance; whereas, in our ornamental gardens, we continually behold the same objects. Even their order and regularity prevent us from being long pleased with them. They have nothing new to offer us, and we grow tired of them. The eye, on the contrary, wanders with pleasure over objects continually diversified, and extending as far as the sight can reach. It was in order to give us this enjoyment that, in most places, the ground was formed smooth and even; but that we might also have pleasing distant prospects, our horizon is surrounded with rising hills. Nature has done still more: it has spared us the trouble of cultivating those flowery meads, or of watering them. An innumerable multitude of seeds is sown in them, which produce a verdure scarcely ever interrupted, or which is at least easily renewed. This prodigious variety of plants with which a field is covered is not for the sight only: they have each a seed, a blossom, qualities, and beauties, peculiar to themselves. It is true that the same species of herbs is prodigiously multiplied in each field; but perhaps we do not make two steps without treading

on an hundred different sorts, each of which has its peculiar use. This is one of the first reflections which we ought to make at the sight of a field. To the pleasure which it affords us our beneficent Creator added considerable advantages. The fields produce plants for our food, and a wonderful number of simples which serve for medicine. But the greatest use of the fields to us is the feeding, without expense, of those animals with which we can the least dispense. The ox, as well that whose flesh we eat, as that whose labor helps to plough our ground, requires no food but grass. The horse, whose services are innumerable, demands no other recompense for his toil than the free use of the field, or a sufficient quantity of hay. The cow, whose milk is one of the great supports of our life, asks nothing more. The field is the most complete inheritance. It is even preferable to meadows, as its produce is certain, and requires neither sowing nor labor. It only costs the slight trouble of gathering what it yields. Its productions are not casual, for it seldom happens that fields are destroyed by drought or inundations. But it is melancholy that men, who are generally so inattentive, so insensible to the blessings of God, should be so in this respect also. We look upon grass with contempt or indifference, perhaps, because it grows under our feet, and has not been made the object of our care

and culture. But whatever may be the cause of our indifference, it is certainly quite inexcusable. Would to God that our hearts were grateful whenever we walk in our fields and vallies ! that at the sight of our meadows enamelled with flowers we were sensibly touched with the goodness of the Creator, who, with a bountiful hand, pours out abundance ! There is not a corner of the earth where we may not discover traces of his good providence ! Every country, every soil, the good and the bad, all equally proclaim the Preserver of the universe.

CONTEMPLATIONS ON A MEADOW.

"Nor is the mead unworthy of thy foot,
Full of fresh verdure and unnumber'd flowers,
The negligence of Nature, wide and wild;
Where, undisguis'd by mimic art, she spreads
Unbounded beauty to the roving eye."

THOMPSON.

DARK and majestic woods, where the pine raises its stately head, where the tufted oaks spread their shade; ye rivers which roll your silver waves through the grey mountains, it is not you I now mean to praise: it is the verdure and the enamel of the fields which are now the objects of my contemplation. How many beauties present themselves to the sight, and how varied are they! Millions of vegetables, millions of living creatures! Some flying from flower to flower, whilst others creep and crawl in the dark labyrinths of the verdant grass. All these insects, so infinitely varied in form and beauty, find food and happiness here. All inhabit this earth with us; and, however contemptible they may be in our eyes, are perfect each in its kind. How soft the murmur of that

limpid stream, which flows amongst the water cresses, and along the banks of clover, whose purple flowers are nourished by its little waves. Its sides are covered with thick grass intermixed with flowers, which, bending over the water, trace their image in it. Behold that forest of waving herbs. What a mild lustre the sun casts on those different shades of green. Those delicate plants, interwoven with the grass, mix their tender foliage; or else proudly raise their heads above their companions, and display flowers without perfume; whilst the humble violet grows on barren hills, exhaling its sweets around. Thus one often sees the useful virtuous man in poverty, whilst the rich and great are clothed in sumptuous habits, wasting in idleness the blessings of the earth.

Winged insects pursue each other in the grass. Sometimes I lose sight of them in the verdure, and then again I see a swarm of them flying in the air, and sporting in the rays of the sun. What other buzzing is this I hear? Why do those flowers so bend their heads? It is a swarm of young bees. They have lightly flown from their distant home, and dispersed over the gardens and fields. They are now gathering sweet nectar from the flowers, in order to carry it to their cells. There is not an idle one amongst them. They fly from flower to flower; and, in seeking their stores, they

conceal their velvet heads in the cup of the flower, or else with labor penetrate into those that are not yet unfolded, and which afterwards incloses the bee. There, on that high clover, is perched a butterfly. He shakes his gaudy wings, he settles the shining feathers which adorn his head, and seems proud of his charms. Beautiful butterfly ! make the flower bend, which serves thee for a throne, and contemplate thy rich dress in the mirror of the water. Then wilt thou resemble a young beauty, admiring herself in the glass which reflects her charms. Her clothes are less beautiful than thy wings, and her thoughts are as light as thine. Behold this little worm playing on the grass ! No researches of luxury, no human art could imitate the green and gold which cover its wings, wherein all the colors of the rainbow are mixed.

O how beautiful is nature ! The grass and flowers grow luxurious ; the trees are covered with foliage ; the gentle zephyr salutes us ; the flocks seek their pasture ; the tender bleating lambs skip and rejoice in their existence ; millions of points of grass rise up in this field, and to each point hangs a drop of dew. How many primroses, with their trembling leaves, are here ! What harmony in the notes of the birds from yonder hill ! Every thing expresses joy : Every thing inspires it.

It reigns in the hills and dales, in woods and in groves. O how beautiful is nature ! Yes, nature is beautiful even in the least of its productions ; and whoever can be insensible to its charms, because a prey to tumultuous desires, pursues false blessings, and deprives himself of the purest pleasures. Happy he, whose innocent life passes away in performing his duty to his maker and in the enjoyment of the beauties of nature ! The whole creation smiles upon him, and joy attends him wherever he goes, and under whatever shade he reposes. Pleasure springs out of every source, exhales from each flower, and resounds in every grove. Happy he who takes pleasure in innocent delights ! His mind is serene as a calm summer's day. His affections are gentle and pure as the perfume of the flowers around him. Happy he who, in the beauties of nature, traces the Creator, and devotes himself wholly to him !

SUMMER.

REFLECTIONS ON THE SUMMER.

" Now genial suns and gentle breezes reign
And Summer's fairest splendors deck the plain ;
Exulting Flora views her new born rose,
And all the ground with short-lived beauty glows."

SUMMER is the Season in which the Creator pours forth the treasures of his blessings in the greatest abundance. Nature, after having charmed us with the pleasures of Spring, is continually employed, during the Summer, in completing the hopes inspired by Spring ; in providing every thing to please our senses, supply our wants, and awaken in our hearts sentiments of gratitude. Wheresoever we go ; whether we climb the hills ; range the vallies ; or seek the shade of the forests ; a variety of beauties present themselves to us ; all different from each other, but each possessed of charms sufficient to engage our attention. If we lift up our eyes, we are delighted with the radiance of the sky ; if we fix them on the earth, they are

refreshed by the beautiful verdure with which it is clothed, and presented with a most agreeable variety of flowers. The pleasing notes and the various melody of birds fill our hearts with a sweet and innocent delight ; and the gentle murmurs of brooks and rivers are highly pleasing to the ear. Lofty trees and groves afford us agreeable shade ; and the fields and gardens supply us with a great variety of different fruits, that begin now daily to ripen ; and which, besides pleasing the eye and the taste, are very refreshing to the body : In short, all that we see or hear, taste or smell, increases our pleasures, and contributes to our happiness. But, in order to be more sensible of the goodness, wisdom, and power of the Creator, in his appointment of Summer, let us attend to some acts of his providence which are more particularly visible at this Season.

And, in the first place, let me direct your attention to a blessing, common indeed, and therefore little regarded ; but a blessing, in itself invaluable, and absolutely necessary to our support and continuance in life ; namely, *Wheat*. Let us cast our eyes on a field of wheat, and calculate, if we can, the millions of ears of corn which cover one single field ; and then reflect on the goodness of God who thus plenteously rewardeth the labors of

men, by supplying them with such an abundance of this most necessary of all food. Let us also consider the wisdom which is displayed in the production of this precious grain. We sow it in the ground, at a certain time, (and that is all that we can do) and, as soon as the earth supplies it with a sufficient moisture, it swells and bursts the outer coat, which covered the root, the stalk, and the leaves : The root then pierces the earth, and prepares nourishment for the stalk, which, though it appears very weak, is strong enough to endure the severity of the season. By degrees it attains its proper height, and produces an ear of corn ; which is inclosed in leaves that serve to protect it, and armed with points to secure it from the birds, It seems, at first view, impossible that so slender a stalk, which grows four or five feet high, should support itself, and bear up its fruitful head, without sinking beneath the weight, or being beat down by the wind. But the Creator has wisely prevented this, by furnishing the stalk with four very strong knots, which strengthen it, but at the same time, leave it the power of bending without breaking. If the stalk were weaker, the wind would break it ; if stronger, birds might perch in it, and peck out the grain ; if it were harder and stiffer, it might, indeed, resist all weather, but would it then serve, as it often does, as a bed for

the poor ? To preserve the tender sprouts from accidents which might destroy them at their birth, the two upper leaves of the stalk unite closely at the top, both to protect it, and to draw nourishing juices ; but as soon as the stem is large enough to supply the grain with sufficient juices, the leaves drop off, that the root may have nothing more to nourish than is necessary. The grain then appears, and thrives till the appointed time ; growing every day more yellow, until, sinking at last beneath the weight of its precious treasure, it bends the head of itself to the sickle ; and the joy that sparkles in the farmer's eyes, the joy of harvest, is a hymn of gratitude to the God of Goodness.

From this life-supporting grain we are supplied with that food which is most common, and most wholesome. Bread is as necessary at the table of a prince as at that of a laborer ; and the sick person is as much refreshed by it as the healthy. A very plain proof that bread is necessary for man is, that it is almost the only food we do not dislike, though we eat it every day ; and the man who has made it his daily food for seventy years, still eats it with pleasure, though he has lost his relish for all other food. We ought, therefore, each day to praise our Creator for this blessing ; and to remember that *he* is unworthy of the bread which he eats who is unthankful for it.

At this Season of the Year we have also an opportunity of observing the astonishing wisdom and power of the Creator in a vast variety of insects. Wherever we go, which way soever we look, they present themselves to our view ; and contribute, like the birds, to banish solitude from our walks, and to fill up our leisure hours with the most pleasing contemplations : For we may trace the hand of God as clearly and as fully in the smallest insect that crawleth on the earth, or flieth in the air, as in the huge elephant, or the whale that lies, like an island, in the water.

The number of insects cannot, perhaps, be ascertained ; some millions are known ; but, at present, I shall confine my observations to two very remarkable ones, only seen in the summer ; the Ant and the Caterpillar.

Ants are famous from all antiquity for their social and industrious habits ; they have long been offered as a pattern of frugality to the extravagant, and of unceasing diligence to the sluggard.

“ The Ants,” says the Scripture, “ are a people not strong, yet are they exceeding wise ; having no guide, overseer, or ruler, they provide their meat in Summer, and gather their food in har-

vest." Their labor and diligence in collecting their stores is wonderful ; they are often seen to carry, and sometimes push before them, grains of corn, or insects, much larger than themselves ; if one faints beneath his load, another hastens to his assistance ; if any thing is too heavy for one, and cannot be divided, several of them join to force it along. In gathering their stores the loaded ants go one way, and the unloaded another, that they may not interrupt each other ; and in the whole society there is not one idle, but every one contributes something to the common stock.

May we not learn from these little creatures, who instruct not by voice, but by example, an useful lesson of activity and diligence ? and how forcibly does this example teach us to seize the fleeting moments ; to lose no opportunity of doing good ; not to waste that time which cannot be recalled in sloth or insignificance ; not to leave a talent unemployed, or a duty unperformed ? Life hath its Seasons, like the year ; the time of health and strength may be considered as its Summer ; and if we then labor, like the ant, we shall not only contribute to the public good, but, probably, acquire a comfortable provision against the Winter of Life, when ease and rest will be very agreeable to us.

Caterpillars are creatures very disagreeable to many persons, who destroy them wherever they meet with them ; and, so far from considering them with attention, will scarcely look at them ; yet, were we attentively to consider them, we should not surely trample them under foot without observing their wonderful formation, and being convinced that in small things, as well as in great, the power, wisdom and goodness of the Creator are admirably manifested.

Caterpillars are hatched from the eggs of butterflies. During the Winter they remain in an egg state, lifeless ; but the same vivifying sun that pushes out the budding leaf and the opening flower, and causes the swelling acorn to give birth to the spreading oak, calls the caterpillar also into life, to share the banquet that nature has provided for her children. Its life however, seems one continual succession of changes ; and, towards the end of the Summer, after having changed its skin several times, it ceases to eat, and is employed in building a retreat, in which it quits the form of a caterpillar, and is changed into a butterfly. But the caterpillar, and the butterfly that comes from it, appear to be two very different creatures : The former was a rough and disagreeable reptile ; the latter is adorned with the liveliest and most beauti-

ful colors, and distinguished by ornaments which man can never hope to acquire : The former crawled sluggishly on the earth, a mean looking worm, often in danger of being crushed, and feeding on gross food ; whilst the latter soars to the sky ; ranges all the beauties of the creation, himself amongst the greatest ; sports in the sun-beams ; displays his golden wings ; triumphs in existence ; and needs no other food than the dews of Heaven, and the honeyed juices which are drawn from the flowers. Who is it that hath raised this insect above the earth, enabled it to live in the air, and bestowed upon it such a profusion of beauties ? The Maker of the butterfly, and of man—who has shewn us, in this extraordinary insect, the wonderful change that awaits ourselves ; when “ this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality,”

It is likewise to be observed, that the beneficent Being, who gives wisdom to man, hath also informed the butterfly how to secure its posterity in safety, by covering the eggs from which they spring with a sort of paste, so closely that the rain cannot penetrate, nor the common cold of winter kill the young contained in them. And we may further remark that butterflies, as well as other insects, constantly lay their eggs on such plants as

will afford their young necessary food, when they are first hatched and too weak to search for it. Hence we should learn to admire the wisdom of Providence ; to cherish the love of posterity, and to remember what we owe to society.

Discontent is said to be the most general evil that troubles the life of man ; and even at this season, when nature presents every where cheerful scenes, there are some who murmur and complain. The *heat* of the Summer displeases many ; they complain greatly of it as weakening and rendering them incapable of labor. But can any man seriously wish the Summer less warm ? Because the heat may, sometimes, be a little inconvenient, would we wish the fruits which are to serve for our provision in the Winter not to ripen ? Let us not forget that heat and cold are distributed to us in the wisest proportion ; and that the Summer nights bring with them a coolness which revives languishing plants, and so refreshes weakened animals that they forget the heat and fatigue of the day. If we studied the order, the beauty and perfection of the creation as attentively as we ought, we should cease those murmurings, which prove us equally ignorant and ungrateful ; and be convinced that, if we could alter any single part of that great machine, the world, we should do much mischief, but could make nothing better.

Summer also, say others, would be delightful, if *Thunder Storms* did not terrify us. The fear of Thunder is perhaps, chiefly, owing to an opinion that it is the effect of the wrath of Heaven; the minister of the Almighty's vengeance: But if we considered how much these storms contributed to purify the air, and render the earth fruitful, we should regard them as blessings more formed to inspire gratitude than terror. They sometimes indeed do mischief, but fear greatly magnifies the danger. There is, generally, some space of time between the lightning and the thunder, and whoever has time to fear is already out of danger; for the lightning alone is fatal: The thunder, when the flash of lightning is past, is as harmless as the sound of a cannon. Superstition and fear would soon be at an end, if we reflected more attentively on the course of nature, or consulted those who are well informed on the subject. But, if we cannot conquer the fear of thunder, let us endeavor to keep a conscience void of offence. The righteous man, calm and composed, fears nothing but his God; and when the thunder roars, he trembles not, but looks up with humble and steadfast confidence to Him who commands the storm, and who, under appearances most dreadful, is allgracious to hear, and almighty to protect.

The awful scenes of storm and tempest, thunder and lightning, are sometimes presented to our eyes to teach us the majesty and greatness of the Creator ; but in these, as well as in more pleasing and cheerful scenes, God appears as the friend and benefactor of mankind ; and this is the season in which all nature furnishes the most striking proofs of it ; when every thing combines to please and to support us. But the time will soon come when nature will lose much of her beauty and variety, and appear in a more gloomy form : She has now almost ended her annual labor, and the nearer we approach to Autumn the more do the enjoyments which arise from the various melody of birds, and the cheerful scenes of flowery meadows and gardens lessen : and the ground is every where strewed with faded leaves and dead flowers. See we not here a picture of our life ? “ All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the field ; the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.” Let us then be wise enough to seek our happiness in lasting blessings. Wisdom and virtue never fade ; they are unceasing sources of endless joy.

To conclude.

What we observe in the Summer of Nature, we may observe also in the Summer of Life. When we have reached our fortieth year, which is the beginning of a riper age, the world loses part of its charms ; and, when we approach the Autumn of Life, we become a prey to cares, and are less calm and serene, less lively and joyous than we were ; we find our strength grow less ; and there come days when we say we have no pleasure in them. Let us therefore enjoy this Summer as if it were to be our last ; and so live as to have no reason to lament our having so often seen the return of this Season.

ON THE DEW.

The gentle dews each night refresh the plain
In kindlier moisture than the copious rain.

THE wise ruler of the world, who watches continually over his children, and provides for all their wants, makes use of more than one mean to render the earth fruitful. Sometimes it is by an inundation, like the Egyptian river Nile, which has the singular property of overflowing its banks at certain stated periods, to water a country where it never rains. Sometimes it is by rains, which fall more or less frequently, in order to cool the air and water the parched ground. But the most common mean, the surest and most universal, though which men the least attend to, is the dew. This inestimable gift of Heaven (which, even in years of the greatest drought, supports and preserves the plants from perishing,) comes in those sparkling drops seen in such profusion morning and evening on the leaves of trees and plants. Dew consists of aqueous vapors raised by heat from the earth and plants, and condensed by cold at night. By this wise plan of the Creator the plants can vegetate and grow in countries even where there is no rain; for the soil of those parts being sandy,

porous, and very moist underneath, the heat draws out a great quantity of dew, which surrounds the plants and supplies the place of rain.

Those different methods which Providence makes use of to moisten and fertilize the earth, ought to remind us of those which he employs to improve the barren heart of man, and to make it fertile in good works. How many hardened hearts oblige him to speak in thunder and lightning, as formerly on Mount Sinai ! Less terrible means are employed to save and effect others ; with a gentle, mild and persuasive voice, God calls them to himself : he awakens their consciences, and refreshes their souls with the beneficent dew of his grace. Let this conduct of our heavenly Father serve as a model for ours. Let us employ all sorts of means to reclaim our fellow creature, to make him better ; but let us particularly endeavor to gain him rather by kindness than by punishment. Let us imitate the beneficence of the Lord : we see how he refreshes the parched earth with dew ; he revives and gives new life to the plants. Let us endeavor to revive the hearts of the afflicted, the languishing, and impoverished, with benefits, and to pour as many blessings on our fellow creatures as the dew sheds upon the plants.

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END OF SUMMER.

— "The fading many colored woods,
Shade deepening over shade, the country round
Imbrown ; a crouded umbrage, dusk and dun,
Of every hue, from wan declining green
To footy black."

THE sun is now taking leave. Every thing is changed with us. The earth, which was lately so beautiful and fruitful, is now becoming gradually barren and poor. We no longer behold that fine enamel of the trees in blossom ; the charms of spring ; the magnificence of summer ; those different tints and shades of verdure in the woods and meads ; the purple grapes ; nor the golden harvests which crowned our fields. When the earth is stripped of its corn, its grass, and its leaves, nothing is to be seen but a rough and rugged surface. It has no longer that beautiful appearance which the growth of corn, greens, and herbs, produces over a vast country. The birds no longer sing. Nothing now recalls to the mind of man that universal joy which reigned throughout all animated nature. He hears nothing now

but the murmuring streams and whistling winds. Constantly the same dull sounds which can only create disagreeable sensations. The fields have lost their perfume ; and the air is damp and cold.

Yet the country, stripped and desert as it is, still presents to a feeling mind the image of happiness. We may recollect with gratitude to Heaven, that the fields which are now barren, were once covered with corn and a plentiful harvest. It is true, that the orchards and gardens are now stripped, but the remembrance of what they bestowed upon us, may make us content to bear the northern blasts which at present we feel so sharp. The leaves are fallen from the fruit trees ; the grass of the field is withered ; the dark clouds fill the sky, and fall in heavy rains. The unthinking man complains at this, but the wise man beholds the earth moistened with rain ; and beholds it with a sweet satisfaction. The dried leaves and the faded grass, are prepared by the autumnal rains to form manure to enrich the ground. This reflection, with the pleasing expectation of Spring, must naturally excite our gratitude for the tender mercies of our Creator. Though the earth has lost its beauty and exterior charms, and is exposed to the murmurs of those it has nourished and cheered, it has already begun

again to labor secretly within its bosom for their future welfare.

Perhaps our own lot in this world has its seasons : if it be so, let us in the dull winter of life have recourse to the provisions laid up in the days of prosperity ; and endeavor to make a good use of the fruits of our education and experience. Happy, if at the close of life, we carry with us to the grave the merit of having been useful to society.

REFLECTIONS ON THE SUMMER WHICH HAS
JUST PASSED.

" 'Twas Spring, 'twas Summer, all was gay,
Now Autumn bends a cloudy brow ;
The flowers of Spring are swept away,
And Summer fruits desert the bough."

JOHNSON.

THE fine days are gone ; and except the pleasing remembrance of having enjoyed them, they have left us nothing but emblems of frailty. How is the whole face of nature changed ! The rays of the sun fall faintly through dark clouds upon gardens stripped of flowers ; on fields where there are scarce any traces of harvest ; and on hills where no verdure is seen. The air no longer resounds with the melody of birds ; the dull silence which reigns is only interrupted by the croaking of ravens, and the screams of the birds of passage taking leave of us to seek more temperate climates. The neighboring hills are become desert ; they are no longer covered with flocks of sheep, nor enlivened by their bleating. Our garden beds and grass plots are laid waste. How gloomy and melancholy the appearance of the whole country,

once so cheerful ! Instead of the beautiful verdure, which was its chief ornament, it now offers nothing to the sight but a dead yellowish hue. The clouds are full of chilling rain ; and thick mists veil from us the serenity of the morning. Such are the prospects which nature now presents. Who can behold them without reflecting on the instability of all earthly things ! The fine days of Summer are flown ; and while we were preparing to enjoy them, they disappeared, and are gone. But have we a right to murmur at the dispensations of God ? No, certainly, we should rather recollect the past season, with the innocent pleasures it afforded, and bless the Ruler of the world for them. What sweet sensations they create ! With what pure joy the soul is filled, in contemplating the beauties of creation !—When the mountains and vallies grow green before our eyes ; when the lark, soaring in the bright clouds, and the feathered choristers in the shady grove, warble their sweet song ; when the flowers perfume the air around us ; when the morning dawn diffuses universal gladness ; or when the setting sun tinges our woods and hills with the finest glow ; what happiness does the enjoyment of nature in full beauty afford us ! What rich gifts do the gardens, fields, and orchards, bestow upon us, exclusive of the pleasures they offer to the senses

and the imagination ! Can we reflect on the months that are passed, without a grateful emotion, and without blessing the Parent of nature, who has crowned the year with his mercies ? We are now living upon the productions of summer and autumn. We have observed how active nature has been during these fine seasons, in fulfilling the Creator's beneficent views in favor of man. How many plants and flowers bloomed up in Spring ! How much corn and fruit has the Summer ripened, and how plentiful has the autumnal harvest been ! The earth has now fulfilled its design for this year, and is going to rest for a time. Nature is continually active during many months. Even its present repose is not useless. It is silently preparing a new creation. Let us ask ourselves if we have been equally active. Have we so employed our time as to be able to shew the fruits of it ? The farmer now counts his sheaves ; ought we not to count our virtues and good works ? Have the pleasures of the Summer made us better or more grateful ? Have we raised our hearts towards God in the contemplation of nature ? What have our employments been in the long summer days ? Have we done good to our fellow creatures ? In beholding the sun, the flowers, and so many delightful objects, have we experienced the sentiments which this magnificent scene ought

naturally to inspire? Or are we conscious that this summer, like many others, has been thrown away upon us?

Let us be grateful that we still exist upon earth, Let us reflect also that this may be our last summer. And knowing that we shall be accountable for all those that we pass, let us from henceforth try to redeem the time that we have lost.

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*A REMEMBRANCE OF THE BLESSINGS WHICH SPRING
AND SUMMER AFFORD US.*

“Summer brought on the fruits which Spring had sow’d,
And nature triumph’d in her genial prime :
Autumn succeeded, and rich sheaves bestow’d,
And golden plenty fill’d the car of time.”

COME, O my friends, let us acknowledge the goodness of the Creator. Let us gratefully recal the time we have passed in the fulness of joy, when, free from cares and anxiety, the renewal of nature filled us with delight ; when devotion followed us to the bower, and even the shadow of sorrow was banished our habitations ; when, hand in hand, we sought the flowery paths in pursuit of the Creator, whom we found on every side. From the thick bush, whither repaired the songsters of the air, we heard their melodious notes. Friendship, harmony, and innocent mirth, combined to render our pleasures still more sweet. Smiling nature lavishing her flowers upon us, we breathed the balsamic odor of roses. The pink and gilly-flower perfumed the air around us ; and, towards

the evening of a fine day, the playful zephyrs wafted sweets to us on their light wings. Then were our souls filled with mild delight : Our lips opened in thanksgiving to the Lord, and our voices mixed with the songs of the birds. Often, when the breath of the wind had cooled the burning heat of the day, and the birds felt animated with new life ; when the clouds were all dispersed, and the great luminary promised to be favorable to us, pleasure gave us wings ; we cheerfully forsook the noise of cities, to seek the green shades, nature's bowers. There we were undisturbed. Wisdom, piety, joy, and innocence, attended us to this rural asylum. The trees waving with the evening breeze, while they covered us with their shade, conveyed the most refreshing coolness to us, and Nature drew forth rich sources of content to pour into our pure hearts. There, entirely given up to the Creator, to nature, and to reflections on our happiness, tears of sensibility filled our eyes. This magnificent universe said we, is too beautiful to be the abode of the man who can unfeelingly behold it. As for us, who love God, we discover in the zephyr, in the stream, in the meads and flowers, in the blade of grass, and the ear of corn, traces of his eternal wisdom, and, throughout all nature, heralds of his power.

AUTUMN.

REFLECTIONS ON THE AUTUMN.

"Fair plenty now begins her golden reign,
The yellow fields thick wave with ripen'd grain ;
Joyous the swains renew their sultry toils,
And bear in triumph home the harvest's wealthy spoils."

IF the variation of the Seasons did not awaken our recollection of the flight of time, we should, probably, not observe the succession of its different parts ; but spend our days and months and years thoughtless of the past, and careless of the future, The gradual and elegantly varied change of Seasons is, therefore, a proof of the goodness of God, and may be a means of our own happiness.

It is impossible to ascribe this variation to chance,* as, in every country, the seasons succeed

* "What careless and inconsiderate men ascribe in common speech to chance or fortune, that is, to *nothing at all*, but a mere empty word, signifying only their *ignorance* of the true causes of things ; this the scripture teaches to ascribe to the all-seeing and all-directing Providence of God."

DR. CLARKE.

each other in the most regular manner, and exactly at the time appointed ; and, as order is the great law which the Creator has laid down for the government of the world, it is our duty to study the order and perfection of his works ; and, in every season of the year, to trace his wisdom and goodness.

At that Season, indeed, which is called *Autumn*, or more generally, in common language, *the fall of the year*, we see little that recalls to our minds the universal joy which lately reigned through all animated nature. We no longer behold the charms of Spring, or the magnificence of Summer ; the earth, no longer exhibiting that beautiful appearance which the grass, the flowers, and the corn lately gave it, presents little more to our eye than a dead, yellowish hue ; the woods and gardens are stripped of that great ornament, their leaves ; scarcely any traces of the golden harvest remain ; the fields, which have bestowed such abundance upon us, promise no more this year ; the winged songsters are silent, and even the sun, when it shines, appears not in its usual glory. Unthinking and ungrateful men, forgetting what they have so lately and so plenteously received, complain of these things ; but wiser and well disposed persons, observing that nature faithfully fulfils the eternal

law of being always useful, reflect with gratitude on the months that are lately past, and bless the Parent of Nature who has "crowned the year with his goodness."

Stripped and desert as the earth is, it still presents to a feeling mind the image of happiness ; we may recollect that the fields, which are now barren, were lately covered with plentiful harvests ; and the remembrance of what they have bestowed upon us should silence the murmurs of those whom it has cheered and nourished.

Indeed we yet continue to receive pleasure from a variety of fruits which the goodness of God lavishes upon us in great abundance. Calculate, if possible, the fruit which one hundred trees bear in a favorable season, and you will be astonished at the increase. What was the design of such abundance ? If the preservation and increase of trees only was the intention, a much less quantity would have been sufficient. It is, therefore, evident that the Creator designed to provide food for man, and particularly for the poor, whom an abundance of fruit furnishes with cheap means of a subsistence which is not only agreeable, wholesome, and refreshing, but is also very useful in the medicinal way. And it is a farther instance

of the goodness of God that these fruits are bestowed upon us in a gradual manner, and with the most wise economy ; that, on the one hand, too great an abundance may not be a load to us ; and, on the other, that we may receive a constant succession and variety of enjoyments. In proportion, indeed, as we advance in Winter, the number of fruits begins to diminish ; but art has taught us to preserve them in that Season also ; and notwithstanding the ravages of birds and insects, there still remains a sufficient quantity for the use of man.

Thus God, like a tender parent, provides not only for the support of his creatures, but also for their pleasure. Shall we not, then, be highly blameable if the enjoyment of the blessings, which we owe to the munificence of our Creator, does not produce in us grateful reflections, and thus sanctify the pleasures of Autumn ?

It is also a proof of the wisdom and goodness of the Creator that the weather grows gradually cold. Were the earth *suddenly* to be deprived of the Summer's heat, it would be fatal to our gardens and fields. All plants would perish. Spring would produce no flowers, nor Summer any fruit. It is by no means, therefore, of little consequence

that, from the end of Summer to the beginning of Winter, the heat should *gradually* give place to the cold : These insensible changes were necessary for the preservation of the fruits of the earth ; and not for this only, but also for the prevention of the disorder, perhaps the destruction, of the human frame.

With what kindness, therefore, has our Creator guarded our health and lives, by granting us such a temperature of air, during the months immediately following Summer, as prepares us, by degrees, to bear the increase of cold without any bad effect !

There are also many other creatures who, if the Winter were to come without any preparation on them, would be unable to endure it. Two thirds of the insects and birds would be destroyed in one night : But now, by the gradual progress of cold, they have time to make the necessary preparations against it. The increasing cold of Autumn warns them to seek places where they may sleep quietly and securely during the severe season ; or to remove into warmer countries.

The *migration of birds* is as astonishing as any thing in the whole compass of nature ; and in

this we may discover the wise and kind direction of Providence, and the wonderful means which God employs to preserve many birds, and point out their subsistence to them, when it fails in some countries. They regularly assemble at a certain time, in order to depart all together ; scarcely a deserter is seen on the day that succeeds their departure ; and every circumstance of their journey has something in it almost miraculous. We are at a loss which most to admire, the force that sustains them in so long a passage, or the order in which the whole is accomplished. It is truly wonderful that these creatures should know the most proper time for their passage. The difference of heat and cold, and the want of food, may incline them to change their habitation ; but how comes it to pass that, when the air is so mild that they might remain, and find food enough, they never fail to depart at the appointed time ? Or how do they know that they shall find food, and a proper degree of heat in other countries ? Shall we suppose that they have any remembrance of the country where they passed a former Winter ; that they see the land to which they go from their height in the air ; that they follow the weather, and continue their flight till they find a climate suitable to their present disposition ; or, rather, that, like shoals of fish, they pursue their prey ?

Their food is insects; with which, in Summer evenings, our atmosphere abounds; and birds, who prey upon them, come hither in the Summer, because our air is moister than that of some other countries, and therefore produces multitudes of these insects; but, on the approach of cold weather, they die, and then these birds necessarily quit us, and follow their food.

But that these creatures, who are void of reason, should know so exactly the way they are to go; should do, what man cannot do, steer their course unerringly over seas and lands, and complete their long journey without assistance, without a guide, without provisions, in the most regular order, through rains, and winds, and darkness; that they should fly in large companies, in order to be less liable to be driven out of their course by storms; and that, when the wind is contrary, they should wait 'till it changes, are circumstances really astonishing; and they furnish a remarkable instance of a powerful instinct impressed on them by the Creator, who is their pilot and preserver. The consideration of these wonderful circumstances may employ, in a very pleasing manner, those whose hearts are disposed to the contemplation of the works of nature, and raise them to still nobler views; to the adoration of *Him* from

whom these creatures have received their faculties, and who has prepared and combined so many things for the support and increase of this part of his creation.

This, likewise, is the season in which great part of the food for ourselves, and many other creatures, is committed to the earth. The farmer now sows his winter corn ; he leaves his grain to corruption, to the rain, the storms and the sun, and knows not what will be the event : for, after all his labors, man can do nothing, but as an instrument in the hand of Providence, towards the production of a plentiful harvest, or even of a single ear of corn. " Except the Lord bless the ground, your labor is but lost that till it ; it is in vain that ye haste to rise early, late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness ;" if God does not cause his sun to shine and his rain to fall in their season, your strength, in the very just representation of the prophet, is but " to sit still." Man soweth, but God giveth the increase ; and, when men have done all that is in their power, God supplieth whatever is beyond their ability. In the Winter, whilst the husbandman resteth from his labors, the Almighty covereth the precious seed, as with a garment ; destroys, by frost, the weeds that would oppress the rising stalk, or draw

off its nourishing sap ; and causeth it, gradually, to spread a beautiful verdure over the face of the earth, giving the promise of a plentiful harvest : In the Summer, he warms it by the beams of the sun, and refreshes it by rain ; and thus all nature, in every season, tends to the general good, and the fruitfulness of the earth, under the direction of the God of Seasons. And, the more strongly to impress you with the conviction of this important truth, God is sometimes pleased to disappoint your expectations ; by first sending, as the effect of your industry, a plentiful crop, and, then, as a punishment for your ungrateful inattention to his Providence, denying you the opportunity to “eat thereof.”

And, surely, when creatures forget their dependence upon their Creator, it is proper that they should be awakened to a sense of their duty by chastisements affecting them in the very instance of their forgetfulness and ingratitude ; to convince them that the success of their labors depends entirely upon Providence ; and that, although the fruits of the earth may be called their's, the seasons for gathering them are God's.

HARVEST HYMN.

" Brown o'er the wide extended fields
The heavy harvest waves ;
Its treasure to the reaper yields,
And forms the ponderous sheaves.

The loaded stack, the spacious barn,
Receive the plenteous store ;
The blessings of the coming year,
The riches of the poor.

Now, grateful for the bounty given,
Let constant thanks arise,
For every bliss that falls from heaven,
Each hope beyond the skies !"

OUR fields crowned with fruits and with corn
are a hymn to the Lord. The joy that sparkles
in the eyes of the farmer is a hymn to the God of
nature. It is he who makes the earth produce
bread, and he that loads us with blessings. Let
us assemble together, and sing praises to the Lord.
Let his praise be evermore the subject of our song.
Let us hearken unto the words he speaks to us,
from the bosom of our fertile fields. " The year
will crown thee with blessings, O world ! thy hap-
piness is my work ; the crops and the harvest are

the works of my power. The rich meadows, and the hills covered with corn, are mine." Yes, Lord, we behold thy grandeur, and we feel the value of thy favors. It is through thee that we exist : life and food are the gifts of thy hands.

Blessed be thou, O field, which producest food for man ! Flourish, thou beautiful meadow ! Be covered, ye forests, with a thick shade ! O nature, be thou ever beneficent towards us ! Then, from morn to night, the Lord shall be the object of our praise. Free from cares, we will rejoice in his blessings ; and our children will repeat after us : the God of Heaven is our Father, the Lord, the almighty Lord is God.

WINTER.

REFLECTIONS ON THE WINTER.

" Oh Winter ! ruler of the invested year !
 Thy scatter'd hair with sleet like ashes fill'd,
 Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks
 Fring'd with a beard made white with other snows
 Than those of age ; thy forehead wrapt in clouds,
 A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
 A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
 But urg'd by storms along its slippery way ;
 I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,
 And dreaded as thou art.

COWPER.

IF we were to examine the works of the Creator more attentively than we do, we should find, even at this season of the year, many reasons to rejoice in his goodness, and to praise the wonders of his wisdom. Few persons are so insensible as not to feel emotions of pleasure and gratitude when the Spring, the Summer, and Autumn, richly display the bounties and the blessings of Heaven ; but, when they see the trees stripped of their fruit, and the fields without verdure ; when the bleak

winds whistle around their dwellings ; when " God giveth snow like wool, and scattereth the hoar frost like ashes," their hearts are seldom affected by gratitude.

The other seasons, the value of which is so little felt whilst they pass, are often extravagantly commended in the Winter, when they can be no longer enjoyed. Such is the too common disposition of men ; they do not esteem the blessings they possess as they ought, nor know their value, 'till they are deprived of them.

But is it indeed true that the Spring, the Summer, and the Autumn alone deserve our attention and praise ; and that Winter is deprived of the blessings of Heaven, and void of motives to gratitude and piety ?

If we could see the chain of Providence which links all nature, great would be our admiration of the wisdom and goodness of its Author. But, however incapable we are of forming a judgment of the whole of the Creator's works, the little we do understand of them gives us abundant reason to acknowledge that the government of God is infinitely wise and good. Winter is a part of the Creator's plan ; and, if we consider it seriously,

we shall find great reason, even in Winter, to praise our constant benefactor.

Millions of rational creatures, dispersed through the different countries of the world, are provided, at this season, with all the necessaries of life. But we must not confine the wisdom and goodness of God to mankind ; his care, during the Winter, extends to animals far more in number than the rational creatures that inhabit the earth, who find their food on the surface and in the bosom of the earth, in the fields, the forests, and mountains, in caves, and the hollow parts of rocks, in the rivers and the seas : and, however wonderful the preservation of mankind may be, we must confess that the care of Providence towards animals is a still more astonishing proof of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God ; who “ openeth his hand, and giveth unto all his creatures their meat in every season.”

That the prodigious number of animals which the world contains should find food and habitation during the Summer is not, perhaps, so surprising ; but that, in this season of the year, when the earth seems exhausted by its fruitfulness, the same number of creatures should continue to exist is truly astonishing.

To guard animals against the usual severity of the weather, Providence has furnished most of them with a covering which enables them to endure the cold. Some are covered with hair ; some with fur ; others with feathers ; and many with scales and shells. Each animal has what best suits it ; nothing unnecessary, nothing wanting ; and every thing so complete, even in the lowest creature, that all the art of man cannot imitate it. Many animals also, when the cold obliges them to quit their Summer dwellings, find a retreat in " clefts of the rocks " and caves ; whither some of them carry beforehand the food which is to support them during Winter. This cannot be done from foresight in these creatures, for that would be to suppose them endowed with more understanding than they possess ; it must therefore be in consequence of the direction of a superior power, whose views they fulfil without knowing it.

There are also animals who find their subsistence under snow and ice ; and, probably, many means made use of by Providence for the preservation of his creatures are unknown to us. One circumstance is particularly remarkable ; namely, that several animals pass the Winter in a profound sleep. Their bodies seem to be so formed that the cold benumbs them, and they fall into a sound sleep ;

which continues 'till the return of heat opens the earth, causes their necessary food to spring, and awakens them from their heaviness. How admirable is the wisdom of God, who has pointed out to these creatures the places where they may sleep in safety their night of Winter, when they can no longer find food ; and who revives them, when the season of their new life arrives !

Can we, on considering these things, fail to adore the gracious Father of all, to whom every animal, from the elephant to the mite, owes his dwelling, his food, and life ? Let this consideration strengthen our confidence in our Heavenly Father. Oh "ye of little faith," anxious, restless, and discontented, pause and reflect on the goodness with which the Almighty sustains the beasts of the field and the forest, the birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea ; all of whom find, in all seasons, proper food and habitations ; and then ask yourselves whether he who shews himself so great and good in smaller objects will neglect the more important ; whether God, who does not disdain to provide for the worm, will forget mankind ? And let this consideration teach you to imitate the generous care of Divine Providence, in contributing not only to the happiness of your fellow creatures, but even to the welfare

of all that lives. They, who are not corrupted by bad habits, are naturally inclined to compassion towards every thing that has life and feeling. This disposition does honor to man ; and he who has rooted it out has but one step more to make ; which is, to refuse to his fellow creatures the compassion he denies to brutes, and he will then be a monster,

But the goodness of God in the appointment of this season will appear still more plainly, if we consider that Winter, so far from being prejudicial to the fruitfulness of the earth, is very favorable to it ; and that this is the season of rest so necessary to nature,

In the preceding months she exerted herself in fulfilling the designs of the Creator by laboring in the service of his creatures : Like a good mother of a family, she employed herself from the morning to the evening of the year in procuring for her children the necessaries, the conveniencies, and comforts of life. Tired of so many cares she now resteth ; but it is only to collect new force to be employed again for the benefit of the world ; to prepare in silence a new creation, and make the necessary dispositions that the earth may recover, at the end of a few months, the children she has

lost. This repose is not less necessary to us, or less worthy of Providence, than the activity the shews in Spring and in Summer : and the Almighty, in granting rest to the earth, enriches man with blessings, to which the Winter rains, however disagreeable they may seem, very much contribute. They are the source of all the beauties and treasures which the Spring and the Summer lavish on us, and prepare for a fruitful and plentiful year ; they revive the earth, fill the rivers, and furnish the Springs with water : the blessings therefore which we receive from them are as innumerable as the drops which fall from the clouds ; and for this reason, instead of murmuring on account of the Winter rains, as inconvenient and unpleasing, we should be most thankful, considering them as the causes of fruitfulness ; for the earth requires not only rest, but moisture, to recover its strength ; and to this gracious purpose does the snow also contribute.

From appearances we might be inclined to think that *snow* cannot be useful to the earth ; but the experience of all ages has taught us that nothing better secures corn, plants and trees from the bad effects of cold than snow. The *salt* also, which snow contains, when softened by the sun, and dissolved gradually, is supposed to enrich the

earth more than rain, or other manures ; agreeably to the words of the scripture, " The rain cometh down and the snow from Heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater."

We all of us often see snow fall, but very few of us, it is to be feared, consider its nature or its use. Such, however, is the fate of many things which we have almost daily before our eyes, though we receive great advantages from them. Let us learn to be wiser ; and reflect that God hath ordained that the rain, which in the Summer cools and refreshes the earth, should, in the Winter, fall in the form of soft flakes of wool, and screen the fruits of it from the inclemency of the cold.

Snow affords us also another very useful reflection : it reminds us of our weakness. What could all the industry and strength of men do, should they undertake to remove the ice and snow ? God, however, does this with the greatest ease : " He sendeth out his word and melteth them : he bloweth with his wind, and the waters flow." And it is not without design that these images of the frailty of worldly things are presented to our view ; they are intended to teach us the uncertainty of earthly

things ; and we may learn from them that our present pleasures are like snow, which dazzles the eye, but soon melts and disappears.

And, as God "giveth snow like wool," so doth he also "scatter the hoar frost like ashes." When the dew falleth in a cold night, it freezes, and the face of the earth is covered with the hoar frost ; which lies, like ashes, upon the corn and grass, and hangs on plants and boughs of trees, very pleasing to the eye, though very piercing where it falls. This also cometh from God, "who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working."

But although the earth, at this season, may be compared to a mother who has been deprived of those children from whom she had the best hopes, she is not bereaved of all her children. Many vegetables preserve their verdure in Winter, and lose none of their Summer ornaments ; and they are emblems of that virtue which is immortal, and survives all outward beauty ; emblems of that most respectable character, a benevolent old man ; who, in the winter of his life resembles those plants which flourish with undecaying verdure ; in whom a mild cheerfulness, the happy remains of his spring time, is seen ; whose virtues make ample amends for the ravages which age may

have made on his person ; and whose wisdom, integrity, and experience, serve for examples and lessons to all around him.

We have reason also to praise God that the Winter, far from being injurious to health, often strengthens it. The Spring and the Autumn are dangerous on account of the sudden changes of weather ; and, in the Summer, the air is often filled with vapors disposed to corruption. Winter has not these inconveniencies : we have then more activity and strength ; the cold gives us spirits, excites us to exercise, and thus contributes to our health as well as pleasure. The Creator hath considered our welfare in this season as much as in others ; and has formed the wisest plans for the preservation and happiness of his creatures throughout the year. If people do not enjoy as good health in Winter as in other seasons, it is *often* their own fault : perhaps, they pass it in idleness, in revelling and drunkenness ; perhaps they have made a bad use of the Summer, and now reap what they have sowed.

Considered only in these lights, Winter is certainly very useful ; and, even supposing that its advantages were not so apparent, it would be sufficient for us to know that Winter is the work of

the Creator, and that all which comes from him must be for the best. They also who are desirous of making use of every opportunity to improve their hearts, will gladly be reminded of the obligation they are under of employing even their Winter days so as to become days of comfort to their souls. It is easy to prove how agreeable as well as advantageous this duty would be. How rational and cheerful would our piety be, if each new appearance of nature led us to trace it up to our Father and our God ! When we see the earth covered with snow, the rivers clogged with ice, the trees stripped of their leaves, and the whole face of nature barren and desolate, let us reflect on the design of the Creator in thus ordaining it, and we shall soon be convinced that every thing is planned with wisdom, and that all the laws of Providence combine for the general good.

There are many objects at this season, which may furnish us with useful reflections, and not only agreeably employ our minds, but amend our hearts. The shortness of the days should lead us to reflect on the short duration of human life ; and on the wisdom, the importance, and necessity of making a good use of our time : and the suddenness with which night sometimes comes on, and interrupts us in the midst of our employments,

should teach us to be careful that death does not surprise us when we least expect it, in the midst of our schemes for many years to come.

As nature, after fulfilling the designs of the Creator, resteth from her labors during Winter ; so man, whose provision is made, and whose wants supplied, enjoys a repose suitable to the season. Happy they who employ it in cultivating their minds, improving their hearts, and laying up the treasure of good works.

Does the Winter contribute to our health ? Let us then not be so imprudent as to make that season disagreeable, or painful, which may be the source of the purest pleasures ; nor destroy, by intemperance, that health which the Lord of life would preserve with so much goodness.

Have we a warm dwelling ? Do we enjoy the conveniencies and the comforts of life ? Should not this teach us to consider our poor fellow creatures ; some of whom, sore pierced by wintry winds, have, perhaps, neither food, nor fire, nor raiment ; are stretched upon the bed of sickness, and too modest to proclaim their wants ? Winter renders beneficence to the poor the more necessary, because it increases their wants ; and we give a

double value to our kindness when we bestow it seasonably. The more the severity of the season increases, the more ready we should be to relieve the necessitous, and to pour into the bosom of poverty all that we can spare. It is our duty to soften the calamities of our distressed fellow creatures, to give them of our abundance, or share our little with them. Recollect that the mercy and goodness of the God of seasons continually attend you through all the changing scenes of life ; that if you are happy in your health, your fortune, and character, you owe all to him ; that it is he who "causeth one man to differ from another ;" and that the best return you can make for his mercies and blessings, is to soften, as you can, the distresses of your fellow creatures, and to permit no one to sink under misery, which it is in your power to relieve.

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DUTY OF COLLECTING OUR THOUGHTS IN WINTER.

"Now, all amid the rigors of the year,
In the wild depth of Winter, while without
The ceaseless winds blow ice, be my retreat,
A rural, shelter'd, solitary, scene ;
Where ruddy fire and beaming tapers join
To cheer the gloom. There studious let me sit."

THOMPSON.

THOSE who are solicitous to make use of every opportunity to improve their minds will gladly be reminded of the obligation which they are under of employing even their Winter days in useful study and serious meditation. It is easy to prove how agreeable as well as advantageous this duty may be made. How perfect would our piety become if every change, every new appearance of nature led us to trace it up to God, whose glory is as manifest in Winter as in any other season !

With a little attention we shall discover, that every thing is planned with wisdom, and that all the laws of Providence combine for the general good. If from the weakness and limits of our

understanding we can only take in the smallest part of God's designs, it is enough for us to know that the ice, the snow, and all the phenomena of Winter, serve, in the plan of Supreme Wisdom, to make the earth fruitful, and to prepare blessings for its inhabitants.

How many objects are there for edifying reflections ! We see the snow and the ice melt quickly ; and behold how rapidly the days pass away ! Ought not this to remind us of the frailty of our existence here ? We inhabit a warm room, and have all the necessaries of life. Should not these enjoyments induce us to consider our poor fellow creatures, who have neither food, fire, nor raiment ? The short space between day and night ought naturally to lead us to reflect on the short duration of life, and the importance of redeeming the time, and making use of every hour. We see numbers imprudently exposing themselves on the ice. Does it not remind us of the levity and thoughtlessness of those mortals, who give themselves up to the pleasures of the world ? How many other objects at this season may furnish us subjects for reflections of this sort, which must have a good effect upon the mind ? If we endeavor not only to employ the mind, but to mend the heart, all these objects may serve for that purpose ; and

we shall rejoice in every good thought, pious resolution, or comfortable image which they awaken in our souls. Let us imitate the bee ; follow our inclination, and yet chuse the finest flower. To a well disposed mind the most barren field is still rich in sweets. We may expect the greatest advantages from thus filling our time. It enables us to conquer sensuality, and to govern our hearts, which are so disposed to go astray. We need not have recourse to turbulent pleasures in order to banish *ennui*. When others seek dissipation in worldly follies, we shall find much nobler and more lasting enjoyments in contemplating the works of God, either in solitude or in a chosen society of virtuous friends. For nothing can inspire a sweeter, purer satisfaction, than the raising of one's heart above terrestrial objects, and partaking of that which employs the angels and the elect in heaven. What rapture to find God every where ! to discover in the flake of snow, as well as in the flower of the Spring ; in the cold Winter, as well as in the heat of Summer, the goodness and wisdom of the Almighty Creator ! And this rapture, which far surpasses all the pleasures of the world, we shall experience, if we learn the habit of reflecting upon it.

HYMN OF PRAISE TO GOD.

"O let for all, our grateful praise arise,
To him whose mandate spake the world to form :
SPRING's lively bloom and SUMMER's cheerful skies,
AUTUMN's rich field, and WINTER's healthful storm !"
SCOTT, of AMWELL.

ALL the heavenly host glorify the power and majesty of the Creator, and all the globes which roll in the immense expanse celebrate the wisdom of his works. The sea, the mountains, and the woods, created by a single act of his will, are the harbingers of his love, the heralds of his power. Shall I alone be silent ? Shall I not attempt to offer up thanksgiving though the pure spirits themselves can offer but imperfect praise ?

By what power do those millions of suns shine with so much splendor ? Who directs the wonderful course of the spheres ? What chain unites them ? What force animates them ? It is thy breath O Lord ! It is thy almighty word. Thou art all in all. Thou calledst the worlds, and they

obeyed. Then was our globe produced. The birds and the fish, the cattle and the wild beasts of the field, and lastly man himself came to inhabit it and rejoice. It is through thee, that the hand of Spring spreads the green lawn under our feet. It is thou that gildest the corn, and givest purple to the grape ; and when the severe frost cometh to make all nature chill, thou coverest it with a dazzling veil. Through thee the mind of man penetrates even to the starry heavens. Through thee he knows the past, and anticipates the future ; distinguishes falsehood from truth, the appearance from reality. Through thee it is that he judges, desires, or fears ; that he escapes from death and from the grave. Lord ! I will ever acknowledge thy greatness. Thou, who readest my heart, accept the emotions it feels, though unable to express them.

RAPIDITY WITH WHICH LIFE PASSES AWAY.

——— "Behold, fond man !

See here thy pictur'd life ; pass some few years
Thy flowery Spring, thy Summer's ardent strength,
Thy sober Autumn fading into age,
And pale concluding Winter comes at last
And shuts the scene."

THOMPSON.

OUR life is short and transitory. Let us consider with what swiftness the days, the weeks, the months, and the years have passed, or rather flown away. They were over even before we perceived it. Let us endeavor to recall them to mind, and to follow them in their rapid flight. Is it possible to give an account of the different æras ? If there had not been in our lives certain very remarkable moments, which made impression on our minds, we should be still less able to recollect the histories of them. How many the years of our infancy, of which we can say nothing but they have glided away ? How many others have passed in the thoughtlessness of youth ; during which, misled by our inclinations, and given up to pleasure, we

had neither the wish, nor the time, to look into ourselves? To these years succeeded those of a riper age, more capable of reflection. We then thought it was time to change our way of life, and to act like reasonable beings, but the business of the world took possession of us to such a degree that we had no leisure to reflect on our past lives. Our families increased, and our cares and endeavors to provide for them increased in proportion. Insensibly the time draws nigh when we shall arrive at old age; and perhaps, even then, we shall neither have leisure nor force of mind to recollect the past, to reflect upon the period to which we are come, upon what we have done, or neglected to do; in a word, to consider the purposes for which we were placed in this world. In the mean time how are we certain of ever attaining advanced age? A thousand accidents break the tender thread of life before it comes to its full length. The child, just born, falls and is reduced to dust. The young man, who gave the highest hopes, is cut down in the age of bloom and beauty; a violent illness, an unfortunate accident lays him in the grave. Dangers and accidents multiply with years; negligence and excess lay the seeds of maladies, and dispose the bodies to catch those that are epidemical. The last age is still more dangerous. In a word, half of those who are born are

carried out of the world, and perish in the short space of their first seventeen years. Behold the concise, but faithful history of life ! O may we employ those days, so short, and so important, in learning how to number them, and to redeem the time which flies so swiftly away ! Even whilst we make these reflections some moments are flown. What a precious treasure of days and hours should we not lay up, if, from the moments which we have to dispose of, we often devoted some of them to so useful a purpose ! Let us think of it seriously ; every instant is a portion of life impossible to be recalled, but the remembrance of which may be either the source of joy or sorrow. What heavenly enjoyment it is to be able to look happily on the past, and to say to one's self with truth, " I have lived so many years, during which I have sown a rich seed of good works ; I do not wish to begin them again, but I do not regret that they have passed !" We should be able to hold this language, if we fulfilled the end for which life was given us ; if we devoted the short space of time to the great interests of eternity.

INSTABILITY OF EARTHLY THINGS.

——— " Life speeds away
From point to point, though seeming to stand still.
The cunning fugitive is swift by stealth ;
Too subtle is the movement to be seen ;
Yet soon man's hour is up, and we are gone."

YOUNG,

THERE is nothing in nature that is not liable to change. Every thing is uncertain and frail. Nothing is durable enough to remain always like itself. The most solid bodies are not so impenetrable, nor their parts so closely united, as to be secure from dissolution. Each particle of matter insensibly changes its form. How many changes has each of our bodies undergone since its formation ! Every year it has lost something of what made a part of itself, and has acquired new matter from vegetable and animal substances.

Every thing on earth increases and decreases by turns ; but with this difference, that the changes do not operate so quickly in some bodies as in others. The celestial globes appear to be still the

same as at the moment of their creation, and they are, perhaps, the most invariable of all bodies. Those however who have observed them with attention, perceive that some stars have disappeared, and that the sun has spots which change, and thus they prove that it is not constantly the same. Its motion also makes it liable to variation; and though it is never extinguished, it has been obscured by fogs, clouds, and even by internal revolutions. This is all we can know of it at the immeasurable distance there is between us. How many other external, as well as internal changes, should we discover, were we nearer!

If we are more struck with the instability of *earthly* things, it is because they are within our view. And how frail are these! How liable to change! Each object continues to look like itself, and yet how different in reality is it from what it was? We daily behold things taking new forms; some growing, others diminishing and perishing. This year, which will soon be at an end, affords undeniable proofs of it. In each one's own little circle he must have experienced many revolutions. Several of those we had known for many years are no more. Many persons whom we have seen rich are become poor, or are at least but in indifferent circumstances. If we examine ourselves also,

we shall find a difference in many respects. Have not our health and activity diminished? And are not all these things so many warnings of our approach towards that great and final revolution which death will operate upon us. Besides, there are many changes which may still take place in the short term of life allowed us. We may soon become poor, or sick; we may experience the infidelity of friends, or the approaches of hastening dissolution. Many things certainly may happen which it is at present impossible to foresee. Such reflections must inevitably oppress and sink us to despair, if religion were not our support and consolation. But this leads us to look up to the only invariable, everlasting Being, whose very nature is immutability, and whose mercy has no end. Full of confidence therefore in his unchangeable goodness, let us submit with resignation to all the changes of this transitory world.

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CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

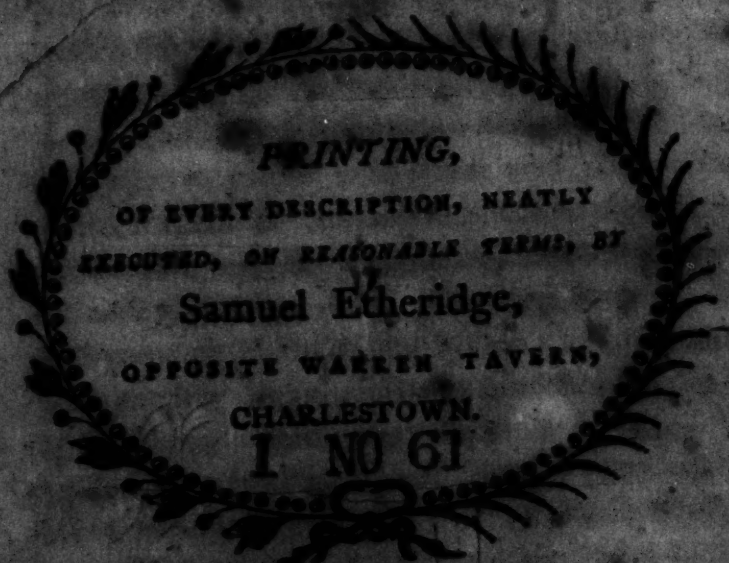
"Now I will climb yon rough rock's giddy height,
That o'er the ocean bends his brow severe;
And, as I mast on time's neglected flight,
Wait the last sunshine of the parting year."

MERRY,

THE close of the year leads me to reflections which, however important they may be, do not always occupy me as they ought. In order to feel more sensibly how short the term of life is, I will examine the use I have made of my past days; though I have reason to believe it will prove a subject of humiliation to me. I first recall to my mind those days the use of which it was not in my power to command. How many hours were then employed in mere bodily wants? How many more have passed in trifling occupations of no service to the mind? Thus, in slightly looking over the use made of these years, I discover a multitude of days lost to the immortal soul, which inhabits this body of clay; and, after these deductions, what will remain which I may justly say have been employed for real happiness? Out of 365 days, it is plain, that I can scarce reckon fifty.

And of the little that remains of time, how much do I lose by my own fault and weakness. How many days have been sacrificed to vice and folly. Perhaps many of those granted me for reflection have been devoted to the world, to vanity, idleness, and false pleasures. Perhaps they may have been profaned by impurity, envy, jealousy, slander, and other vices, which betray a heart void of respect for God and charity to our neighbor. Even when inspired with a desire to walk in his paths, how much time is irrecoverably lost in thoughtlessness indifference, doubts, anxiety, want of temper, and all those infirmities which are the effects of frailty. Alas ! how swiftly does the little space of time we can dispose of fly away ! A year passes almost insensibly ; and yet a year is of great consequence to a Being whose life is reckoned by hours. Before we have well thought of it, a year is gone. When we recollect how little of it we may have spent suitably to the purposes of our creation, we may well wish to recall those hours which were ill employed. But it is in vain. The year, with the good and bad actions which have marked it, are swallowed up for ever in eternity.

Let this awful thought influence our minds so as to redeem the time we have lost, by making the wisest, the most virtuous improvement of what remains.



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